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HAIRY EYEBALL PEEPS SONG DONG'S TIDY CLUTTER AT YBCA P28

GUARDIAN

MARCH 16 - 22, 2011 THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN **INDEPENDENT, LOCALLY-OWNED** SFBG.COM VOL. 45, NO. 24 FREE

Sunshine superhero

Small-town editor Tim Crews fights the forces of secrecy — and wins.
Plus: Behind the Twitter deal — exclusive documents. And why isn't Willie Brown registered as a lobbyist? Our 25th annual freedom of information special. **P14**

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The San Francisco Ethics Commission
has been far too lax in pursuing
enforcement of the lobbying laws.

EDITOR'S NOTES

By Tim Redmond
tredmond@sfbg.com

The numbers in the Twitter tax-break deal just keep getting bigger. And the politics keep getting stranger.

City Editor Steven T. Jones went through hundreds of pages of city records on the Twitter negotiations; the results of his investigation are on page 12.

But two elements jumped out at me right away. One is that San Francisco officials seem be really bad at negotiating with private companies. It's now clear that billionaire Oracle CEO Larry Ellison took the city to the cleaners on the America's Cup deal, demanding (and getting) millions of dollars in extra concessions that the Board of Supervisors never approved. And talks with Twitter aren't a whole lot better.

Then there's the size of the tax break.

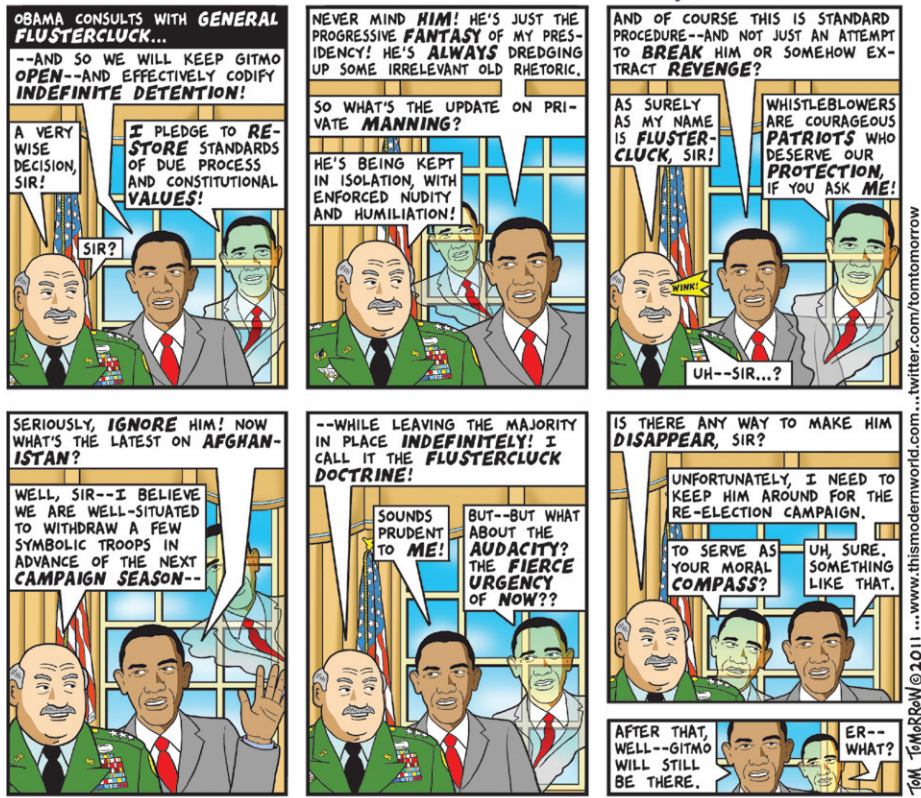
When this was first presented, proponents argued that the city's 1.5 percent payroll tax would discourage Twitter from staying in town and expanding its workforce. I've always said that's ridiculous; the tax amounts to such a modest business expense that no honest corporate executive would ever say it was a factor in a hiring or relocation decision.

Ah, but that's not what's really going on here. The documents show that Twitter isn't just worried about the annual payroll tax. It's all about what happens when the company goes public — and many of its employees become very, very rich.

See, the city's payroll tax also applies to stock options. If, as city economist Ted Egan estimates, Twitter winds up after its initial public offering with a market capitalization of \$12 billion (entirely possible), and 25 percent of that money goes to employees as stock options (entirely possible), then the Twitterites (350 or so now and maybe another 300 in a few years) CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



The lobbyist loophole

EDITORIAL As the stories in this issue show, open government laws are critical to democracy. Without the city's sunshine law, we wouldn't know how the proposal to give Twitter a tax break ballooned into a major giveaway (see p. 12). Without the sunshine laws, Tim Crews, the embattled publisher of the Sacramento Valley Mirror, wouldn't have been able to use his small paper to hold public officials accountable (see p. 14)

That's why the laws on the books need to be enforced — and sometimes strengthened. One example in San Francisco is the lobbyist registration requirement.

Here's the problem: Former Mayor Willie Brown, who now works for at least two major outfits with business before City Hall. As Tim Redmond reports on page 10, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. paid Brown some \$480,000 in 2007 and

2008. And although Brown is a lawyer, nobody can honestly believe that was for legal work. He was clearly paid to give the embattled utility political advice and to pull political strings. And PG&E has major interests at City Hall — San Francisco is trying to set up a community choice aggregation system that PG&E opposes, and (of course) the utility has spent almost 90 years trying to block public power in this town. There are dozens of other city issues, from facility safety to the franchise fee, that affect PG&E's bottom line.

Has Brown tried to influence city officials on behalf of the utility? The public has no way to know. By law, any individual who lobbies for a private client (and earns more than \$3,000 a quarter doing so) has to register with the Ethics Commission, reveal his or her clients, and report on all con-

tacts with city officials. Brown has never done that.

Brown also works for the owners of the Fairmont Hotel, who want the right to convert hotel rooms to condos. Mayor Ed Lee just submitted legislation giving the hoteliers what they want, and Brown is Lee's political mentor. Connection?

The public has a right to know who's trying to do what deals behind closed doors; that's why the city has a lobbyist registration law. The voters have a right to know whether lobbyists are giving money to elected officials; that's why the law requires registered lobbyists to itemize those contributions. But it's not always honored — and as Brown shows, it can be openly defied. And nothing happens.

Part of the problem is that the Ethics Commission has been far CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

The song of
Ghetto Girl

OPINION Editor's note: POOR Magazine, one of my favorite publications, holds an annual benefit on Valentine's Day featuring a "Battle of ALL the Sexes" poetry slam. This year's event, hosted by Alexandra Byerly, had a mixed-martial arts theme and was held in an eight-foot cage built by artist Will Steel in the Submission Gallery in the Mission District. Judges were La Mesha Irizarry, Deborah Major and Laure McElroy. I agreed to publish the first-place winner, which follows. Find the second and third place winners on sfbg.com on the Politics blog. (Tim Redmond)

By Jewnbug

(this Battle came from the battle:
Educated Ghetto Gurl vs. The Society)

Educated ghetto gurrl
born in a place
conditioned for death
raised on government cheese
parents targeted to be dope feens
houseless n hungry
society wants me to be ignorant
but ain't no dummy
got wize to tha mizeducation
of yo surveillance
projects
public skools
prizons
U.S. military enlistings
never assimilating or listening
stay thug life
resisting
rising to tha top
singing ghetto supastar!
Consciousness
cultivated underground
can't afford yo brand name labels
making my fashion talk of tha town
rebel with a cause
speaking out against
yo policies, protocols, laws
prohibited my native tongue
pigeon
slang
CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

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EDITOR'S NOTES

CONT>>

will walk away (after costs) with \$2.7 billion.

That's about \$7.7 million for each current employee — although the folks at the top will get a whole lot more than that.

So several hundred instant multimillionaires and possibly a couple of instant billionaires. People who will vault into the income and wealth bracket that has been radically undertaxed in this country for many years.

For the \$12 billion company, it also means a payroll tax liability of \$40 million. And that's got Twitter all a-twitter.

Let's be honest here: A number like that is not chump change, and might convince a CEO to leave town. But it's also politically tricky. Who wants to go out there and argue that a company that rich, with all those rich employees, can't pay taxes on its windfall?

The payroll tax exemption is supposed to create jobs. This is another league altogether — and it has nothing to do with job creation.

So let's have that discussion, shall we? Forget the puny tax on weekly payroll and this rapidly-growing tax-free zone in the Tenderloin. Cut to the chase: should San Francisco exempt Twitter from the IPO stock options tax? That, at least, is worth fighting about. **SFBG**

LOBBYIST

CONT>>

too lax in pursuing enforcement of the laws. The agency lacks the resources to do serious investigations. As a result, its director John St. Croix told us, all the staff can do is respond to complaints. But even with the limited money it has, the commission can do a lot more. Public hearings on the failures of lobbyist registration and campaign contribution reporting would be a good first step. And how hard would it be to cross-check campaign filings with lobbyist filings to see which lobbyists don't properly report their contributions? A simple computer program could do that in a few minutes.

The commission also needs to do a better job making its funding case to the supervisors. The utter lack of serious enforcement of laws

The public has a right to know who's trying to do what deals behind closed doors.

involving powerful interests doesn't instill confidence in the agency.

But the law is also vague in parts, and the supervisors need to fix it. A clearer definition of "lobbyist" is a clear mandate. And enforcement needs to be increased. Willful violation of the state's Political Reform Act is a misdemeanor crime. Violating the city's lobbyist law should be too. **SFBG**

GHETTO GIRL

CONT>>

Ebonics
U ain't my god
n I ain't yo son
speaking too loud too fast
causing lyrical whiplash
I smash on u
U thinking u more dignified
cuz I rock a shoelace fo a belt on sum jeans
please!
U put me down
then capitalize on my swagger
like, "that's hella ghetto"
I don't play tho
no diplomatic tactful rage
straight up in yo face
u label me
trouble maker
that's code for
truth teller
fo real for real
no faker
I know tru essence of success
despite the mess
of yo civilized vest
my interest to do more then survive
manifest
came when I held my head high
with no shame
yea I'm from the ghetto
n I'm doing big thangs
educated ghetto gurr!
she was kung fu fighting
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educated ghetto gurr!
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Unregistered lobbyist

Former Mayor Willie Brown is a powerful advocate for private interests — but he flouts lobbyist registration laws

By Tim Redmond
tredmond@sfbg.com

In 2007 and 2008, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. paid former Mayor Willie Brown a total of \$480,000 for consulting work. Since Brown has never been utility lawyer, it's almost certain that money has bought political advice and access.

Brown is also working for the owners of the Fairmont Hotel, which wants to tear down one of its towers and build as many as 180 luxury condos.

His public affairs institute shares office space with one of the most powerful lobbying firms in town. He meets with or talks regularly with the mayor and members of the Board of Supervisors.

Yet unlike dozens of others who seek to influence public policy for hire, Brown is not registered as a lobbyist at City Hall.

On the surface, it's a fairly modest issue — all Brown would have to do to comply with the letter and spirit of the city's law is to fill out a form, list his clients, and reveal which officials he's been talking to. It would take him 10 minutes.

But the fact that someone who is widely acknowledged to be among the most influential power brokers in San Francisco refuses

to disclose whom he's working for leaves city officials and the public in the dark — and raises a long list of questions about the effectiveness of the city's ethics laws.

There's a reason city law requires people who seek to influence city officials for money to disclose what they're up to. When elected officials, commissioners, or department heads meet with advocates, they need to know who's paying the bills. If, for example, Sup. Jane Kim has breakfast with Brown (which Brown himself reported on in a recent column in the San Francisco Chronicle), she needs to know: Does he have a client with an agenda? If he asks her to meet with someone, is he just looking out for the interests of the city — or is he pushing a paid special interest?

When Brown has dinner with Mayor Ed Lee (as he did several weeks ago) the voters need to know: Is this dinner companion pushing the mayor to make policy decisions that might help a private interest?

THE RULES

The definition of "lobbyist" in city law is designed to avoid putting special requirements on advocates who push issues on their own or for purely political reasons. A neighborhood activist pushing for

a stop sign or better police patrols doesn't have to register. Neither does a restaurant owner looking for a permit to put tables on the street. The only people who have to register are those who represent a client who pays them more than \$3,000 in any given three-month period.

Lawyers are exempt if they're contacting city officials purely about specific pending litigation or claims. Labor leaders are exempt if they're talking about wages or benefits for their union members.

The requirements aren't onerous. Lobbyists simply disclose their clients, the issues they're working on, the city officials they have contacted, and any campaign contributions they've made.

There's no doubt Brown meets the financial threshold in at least one instance. Documents on file with the state Public Utilities Commission show that PG&E paid him \$280,000 in 2007 and almost \$200,000 in 2008. And although Brown is a lawyer, there's no indication that he is representing PG&E in any litigation against the city.

On the other hand, PG&E is fighting hard to derail the city's community choice aggregation program. Is Brown part of that

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10 »



Brown: who's he representing? | GUARDIAN PHOTO BY BEN HOPFER

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Unlike dozens of others who seek to influence public policy for hire, former Mayor Willie Brown is not registered as a lobbyist at City Hall.

TWITTER 12

JAMES MADISON AWARDS 14

ALERTS

By Jackie Andrews
alert@sfbg.com

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Anarchist salon and potluck
Get together with other anticapitalist and establishment-challenging folk at this month's anarchist salon, a monthly gathering and conversation followed by a potluck social. This month's focus is on radical mental health and wellness. 7-9:30 p.m., \$2-\$5 suggested donation
Station 40
3030B 16th St., SF

Screening plus potluck
Enjoy a special screening of *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash*, an alarming documentary about the pervasiveness of crude oil in our everyday lives — from the products we buy to the food we eat. 7:30-9:30 p.m., \$5 suggested donation
Humanist Hall
390 27th St., Berk.
www.humanisthall.org

THURSDAY, MARCH 17

International media conference opener
The UC Berkeley two-day conference "Crossing Boundaries" looks at new media and the shape of international news in this age of Internet and cell phone reporting. Speakers include Alan McClain of WikiLeaks, Joaquin Alvarado of American Public Media, and many more. Conference continues on March 18. Check the website for schedule. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., \$150-\$250
Sutardja Hall
UC Campus, Berk.
www.crossoverboundaries2011.org

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Amnesty International conference opener
Celebrate 50 years of high-impact activism by Amnesty International with an all-weekend event featuring an array of notable guests including Joan Baez, Steve Earle, Christy Turlington Burns, Jahi, and many

TROUBLETOWN

BY LLOYD DANGLE



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more — and that's just day one. Conference continues March 19 and 20. Check the website for schedule. 8 a.m.-5 p.m., \$40-\$125
Fairmont Hotel
950 Mason, SF
(202) 509-8194
www.amnestyusa.org

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Girls rock!
Join Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering girls through music, and its after-school program participants for a rockin' recital spotlighting the culmination of 10 weeks' worth of hard work. Fifty-five gals in 12 bands showcase their original songs written at the camp. Enter the drawing for an extra \$5 for a chance to win sweet new ax — a cherry red Gretsch Electromatic

guitar. Proceeds go to ensure that the after school program continues to rock on. 1-3 p.m., \$10 suggested donation
Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts
1428 Alice, Oakl.
www.bayareagirlsrockcamp.org

Antiwar demonstration
Protest the war in Iraq on the eighth anniversary of the occupation. Gather at the U.N. Plaza with your signs and radical spirit, then march to two boycotted hotels and demand an end to the "war" on working people. Noon-4 p.m., free
UN Plaza
Seventh and Market, SF
www.answersf.org
Facebook: National Day of Action Against the Wars

MONDAY, MARCH 21

World Water Day
Wise up, get down, and take action — learn more about local and global water issues with live music, live painting, dance performances, spoken word, and more. Proceeds benefit water projects in the Bay Area and Kenya. 6:30-9:30 p.m., \$10-\$15
The New Parish
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www.baylaurelproductions.com SFBG

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POLITICS

The latest on the proposed city ordinance that would reduce Yellow Pages waste, plus Mayor Bloomberg's visit to Mayor Lee, SFBG Radio, and more



NOISE

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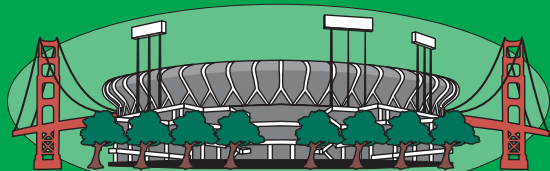
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Brown CONT.

effort? There's no way to know.

It's clear he talks to local officials regularly. Most members of the Board of Supervisors we contacted said they had talked to Brown at some point in the past year. "He called me to ask how he could help with the local hire legislation," Sup. John Avalos told us. "I told him he could call (then-Sup.) Bevan Dufty. He said he would, but I don't know if it ever happened." Sup. Sean Elsbernd told us he speaks to Brown about "the state of local political dynamics," but said he can't remember being lobbied on any particular issue.

Insiders say that's typical — Brown rarely lets anyone know exactly what his interests are. "The talent of Willie is his ability to create plausible deniability," one city official, who asked not to be named, told us.

But when Brown is involved, things have a funny way of happening. Take the Fairmont Hotel.

FRONT OF THE LINE

The Fairmont's owners, who include the Saudi royal family and a group of American investors, want to tear down one of the hotel's towers, eliminate several hundred hotel rooms, and replace them with high-end condominiums. That requires a city permit — legislation by former Sup. Aaron Peskin limits the number of hotel rooms that can be converted to condos and requires applicants to submit to a lottery for the right to convert.

The Fairmont applied for a permit in 2009, and won tentative approval. But in October 2010, the Planning Commission refused to certify the project's environmental impact report. With no valid EIR, the permits expired, meaning the hotel would have to go back and reenter the lottery, with no guarantee of success.

So the Fairmont owners are seeking special legislation that would allow them to submit a new EIR without going to the back of the line — in essence, an exemption from the lottery. So far there's no champion on the Board of Supervisors, and the hotel workers union has been dubious about the project, fearing it will cost union jobs in the long run.

But early in March, Mayor Lee quietly submitted his own

legislation to the board, offering the Fairmont everything the owners want.

Who's working for the owners? Willie Brown.

Bill Oberndorf, part of the local ownership group, told us Brown was an "advisor" to the project. "Nobody in the city has more knowledge about how to get things done than Mayor Brown," he said.

So did Brown talk to Lee before the mayor introduced his Fairmont bill? And isn't that a valid question? At press time, Lee's office hadn't responded to my questions. But if Brown was a registered lobbyist, he'd have to report that information.

Who else are Brown's clients? Since he doesn't register, there's no list. But there are some clues.

"The talent of Willie Brown is his ability to create plausible deniability."

For example, the headquarters of the Willie Brown Institute is situated at One Market Plaza, Suite 2250. That's the same address as Platinum Advisors, the high-powered lobbying firm founded by Darius Anderson. Among the firm's clients: AECOM, the engineering and construction giant, which has a \$147 million contract on the Chinatown subway project; PG&E; and Sutter Health, which wants to build a \$1 billion hospital on Van Ness Avenue.

Others who lobby regularly at City Hall don't always register. Rob Black, who works for the Chamber of Commerce, is a constant presence.

Black told us the chamber used to be considered a "registered lobby entity" that was required to report all contacts with public officials and the issue involved. But the Board of Supervisors changed that law last year, requiring lobbyist registration only from individuals who are paid at least \$3,000 per quarter for lobbying. Furthermore, the definition of lobbying doesn't include attending or speaking at public hearings or writing letters. So while the SF Chamber's Black, Steve Falk, and Jim Lazarus all lobby city officials, Black said, none have exceeded that threshold. "If we hit the monetary threshold, we'll start filing individually," he said.

The fact that Brown is a lawyer doesn't excuse him from registering, said Ethics Commission director John St. Croix "If someone is paid specifically to lobby government, they should register," St. Croix said.

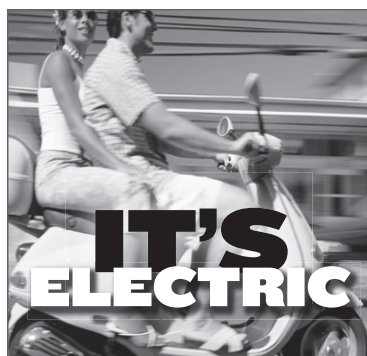
Sup. Ross Mirkarimi told us that the city needs to take a look at the lobbyist registration law to make sure that everyone who has private interests is properly registered.

Elsbernd said that others — particularly labor leaders and union staffers — also regularly lobby but don't register. And while the law may allow them to skate underneath (like Black), there's a huge difference between, say, Labor Council Executive Director Tim Paulson appearing at City Hall and Brown meeting with city officials.

When Paulson appears, there's no doubt in anyone's mind whom he represents. The same could be said of Black. Although the chamber has many members, it's clear that he's pushing the interests of the big-business community.

On the other hand, Ken Cleaveland, public affairs director of the Building Owners and Managers Association, is duly registered with the Ethics Commission.

Brown — as is his typical practice — didn't return my calls seeking comment. But by flouting the rules, he's able to operate completely behind the scenes, influencing policy decisions in secrecy, with no accountability whatsoever. That's a violation of the exact reason the lobbyist registration laws exist. **SFBG**



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Behind the tweets

How the Twitter tax break grew into an expensive giveaway that involves police patrols, a new Muni line — and a lot of real estate

By Steven T. Jones
steve@sfbg.com

A Guardian review of the voluminous e-mails and other public records behind the proposed Mid-Market tax exclusion zone shows how public officials and private power brokers promised millions of dollars in benefits to Twitter and greatly expanded the tax-exclusion zone to unrelated properties with little explanation, concern over impacts, or understanding of how it would affect city finances.

The result was a proposal that could cost the cash-strapped city more than \$17 million — a cost that even the city's fairly conservative economist Ted Egan told the Guardian isn't justified for many of the properties that were included in the proposal, particularly the large commercial office buildings along Market Street and the small businesses in the Tenderloin.

"It's giving taxes away to properties that are going to fill up anyway," said Egan, who recommended several changes to lessen the proposal's cost, even though he supports giving a tax break to Twitter and thinks the deal will be a net positive if it stimulates business development as much as its backers hope.

The proposal would exempt companies in Mid-Market and the Tenderloin from paying the city's 1.5 percent business payroll tax on any new jobs they create for six years. It was sweetened even more for Twitter — city officials promised the company a new Muni line, police foot patrols, and various other tax credits and exemptions to improve Twitter's cash flow, the documents show.

The Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development worked almost full-time on the deal for several months to keep Twitter from following through on its threat to leave town. Indeed, OEWD staffers don't even acknowledge that the tax break is a loss to city coffers, arguing the city would lose money if Twitter leaves and keeping the company here will increase property taxes and rents in the Mid-Market area.

Yet there is little in the documents to indicate how real that threat is or

whether the legislation will convince the company to stay here, and Twitter hasn't responded to inquiries from the Guardian or other media outlets.

Egan pointed to a reason for Twitter to leave that hasn't been part of the public discussion to date. The city's payroll tax applies to stock options — and Twitter would be on the hook for as much as \$40 million in taxes if the company goes public. But he said that could be addressed more directly without the broader giveaway.

OEWD head Jennifer Matz said she trusts Twitter executives and "they are out the door if we don't do this." She also said she disagrees with Egan that the city is giving away more than it needs to and "there is no question in my mind it will bare its fruits."

Yet she also acknowledged the difficult precedent this deal is setting and said she's already fielded regular calls from other companies asking for their tax break. "I've had multiple conversations like that," she said. "We tell the other businesses, 'we're sorry.'"

Not everyone shares her faith in the power of tax breaks, with progressives and the city's biggest public employee union opposing the deal. Critics have said Twitter is a rich company that is essentially trying to shake down city taxpayers, despite previous assurances to remain here. After then-Mayor Gavin Newsom made one of many visits to the company on March 10, 2009, Twitter officials wrote on the company blog, "We assured Mayor Newsom that as Twitter grows, we'll continue to keep our headquarters here in San Francisco."

That all changed the next year as Twitter officials looked to expand and relocate into the SF Mart building at Market and Ninth streets.

"OEWD staff has been actively engaged with Twitter since February of 2009," Matz wrote in a Jan. 18 memo to Sup. Jane Kim soliciting her support for the tax breaks.

But it wasn't until October 2010 that records show the deal really taking shape. According to memos from Matz, Twitter CFO Ali Rowghani met with Newsom and told him that



Then-Mayor Gavin Newsom appeared at Twitter's office March 10, 2009, prompting the company to pledge "We'll continue to keep our headquarters here in San Francisco," something it now says it won't do without a multimillion-dollar tax break.

the company's top choice for a new headquarters location was SF Mart (which also happened to be where Newsom's campaign for lieutenant governor was headquartered at a discounted rent) but Twitter's concerns were "public safety, transportation, neighborhood conditions, [and] cost."

The memos show Newsom returned to Twitter on Oct. 29 with his chief of staff, Steve Kawa, Police Chief Jeff Godown (then assistant chief), and Matz — promising not just the payroll tax break and enterprise zone tax credits but 18 hours a day of police foot patrols in the area and the creation of a new Muni express line, 47A, between the Caltrain Station and the Twitter headquarters.

None of those costs are being figured into the deal. Matz said the new Muni line was a service restoration that has already been approved but not yet funded, and that the foot patrols would simply be absorbed into the police budget. These are just a few of the many guesstimates and unaccounted for costs in this highly complex deal.

EXPANDING THE GIVEAWAY

Throughout the month of January, new properties kept getting added to the district by various people, from OEWD staffers to Sup. Jane Kim — who greatly expanded the district and refuses to answer Guardian questions about why — and Randy Shaw, who runs the Tenderloin Housing Clinic and the Beyond Chron blog and has been a vocal tax-break supporter.

"Payroll tax thing is going to happen and Randy Shaw wants us to add the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District!" OEWD's Amy Cohen wrote on Feb. 2 to a real estate con-

sultant with the Northern California Community Loan Fund.

None of the requests for expanding the tax exclusion zone included an explanation of why that property should be in — and in each case they were added to the area without question. The only possible exception was when the Warfield Building was added Jan. 7 after OEWD learned Burning Man was seeking to rent headquarters space there. Yet Burning Man founder Larry Harvey told us it planned to move to mid-Market with or without the tax break, and that it is now negotiating for a different building, although the Warfield remains in the tax exclusion district.

"Can you add 875 Stevenson to the boundaries and send the revised map? Thx," one OEWD staffer wrote to another on Jan. 13.

"I want to add one more area: I want to go halfway down the block between Fifth and Sixth grabbing everything heading east up to the Cityplace properties," Matz wrote to another OEWD staffer on Jan. 14.

New properties were being added right up to the point that the legislation was introduced on Feb. 9. The day before, Shaw wrote to Matz and OEWD's Amy Cohen telling them that the owner of the Hastings Law School garage "should get the exemption if he thinks it might help," and that property was added. Cohen then gave Shaw credit in an e-mail to UC Hastings CFO David Seward: "We're going to put your properties in. Randy is good with it!"

Even some OEWD staffers seemed surprised that the tax exemption area had grown so far beyond its original borders. "Wow, when did the entire TL get thrown in?" OEWD

Project Manager Lisa Pagan wrote to Cohen in a Feb. 8 e-mail.

But Matz defended the expansion and said it wasn't as willy-nilly as it appears. "There was a lot more conversation than was reflected in those e-mails," she told us. "The boundaries evolved due to more thorough thinking."

Yet she acknowledged it's tough for skeptics of the deal to determine why properties were included, whether political favoritism played a role, or who stands to benefit from the decisions.

As OEWD staff prepared memos for the mayor and supervisors on Jan. 13, they also discussed talking points for the media and how to share credit for those outside City Hall. As Cohen wrote to another OEWD staffer, "Randy Shaw — we are crediting him with coming up with the idea. He told me he talked to a bunch of people, including supervisors, and got lukewarm reception."

That assessment runs contrary to how proponents have publicly claimed the idea has enthusiastic support in City Hall. Indeed, it wasn't until Egan's report came out one day before the first public hearing that proponents of the deal started discussing why they had expanded the boundaries so far.

QUESTION OF ALLEGIANCE

For those who aren't simply fiscal conservatives who automatically support corporate tax breaks, the wisdom of this deal relies on whether people believe Twitter is headed to Brisbane if its demands aren't met.

"The real question is do you believe Twitter is leaving if they don't get this," Egan said. "It's impossible to say."

He's convinced that the high stock option price tag would be enough to cause most companies to leave town. But OEWD seems to just take corporate claims at face value, as it did when Oracle CEO Larry Ellison said he needed \$128 million in public subsidies to hold the America's Cup boat race here (see "The biggest fish," Nov. 30, 2010) only to later agree to a greatly reduced public subsidy.

Even the two supervisors who are sponsoring the legislation, Kim and Board President David Chiu, don't seem to have had the opportunity to assess the deal free of OEWD's advocacy for a company that has refused to share any financial records with the city.

Matz set up phone conversations between Twitter's Rowghani and Chiu and Kim on Jan. 21, sending the two supervisors an e-mail that day recommending they ask three questions of Twitter: why the company needs the tax break, whether it would commit to keeping its entire headquarters here, and what community partnerships it would commit to.

She then sent Rowghani an e-mail that same day letting him know what the supervisors would be asking and what they wanted to hear. Matz told him both supervisors support the deal "but need to hear from you how and why payroll taxes moves the needle for you."

Matz told us she sees nothing wrong with coaching Twitter.

"It was more like facilitating a first date between friends," Matz said of sharing information with Twitter. "I was simply trying to facilitate a productive conversation."

Drafts of a community benefits package were watered down to please Twitter, the documents show. Language claiming that Twitter will try to hire more San Franciscans who don't have four-year college degrees became a pledge to work with city officials on "a mutually agreeable program to train" those individuals.

In the end, even Matz admits that the community benefits agreement is too weak and vague: "We want to work with them in making that stronger," she said.

Shaw, the records show, functioned almost as a de facto member of the OEWD staff, strategizing with officials while writing articles in Beyond Chron.org that tried to retain a thin veneer of journalistic objectivity, such as "Landmark Measure Would Revitalize SF's Mid-Market and Upper Tenderloin Area," which he wrote and forwarded to Matz on Feb. 8.

"Article is perfect. This is game-changing, largely for the signal it sends about the city's commitment to improving the area," she wrote in response.

FACTS AND FICTIONS

In addressing progressive critics of the deal, Kim said she greatly improved the proposal before agreeing to sponsor the legislation, insisting that its duration be reduced from eight years to six, its boundaries be expanded, and the payroll tax exclusion be limited to new jobs that a company creates rather than all its employees.

Yet the documents show that OEWD had been developing two options for the legislation, total jobs and "net new jobs," since well before Kim got involved.

The OEWD also sold the deal to supervisors and the public during the month of January with figures it couldn't support — such as repeatedly claiming that the creation of 300 jobs at Twitter would create 400 additional jobs and \$174 million in economic activity. Yet when the OEWD finally checked those figures with Egan on Feb. 2, he wrote that "it is only 100 additional jobs" and "not sure where you get \$290,000" as the economic value per job.

Yet for the OEWD and the other proponents of this deal, the record shows a determination to get the deal done — and then make it sound good. "Make the narrative as strong as possible," Cohen wrote to Matz on Feb. 1, passing on the concerns expressed by Kim's office. "Ultimately, we need to be able to show that this is not a net loss, it is a net gain."

But behind the scenes, the actual cost to taxpayers of retaining Twitter is being obscured by a variety of financial mechanisms and budget decisions by city departments.

Even Kim's shortening of the program brought new demands by Twitter. In a Feb. 9 e-mail from Matz to Chiu and Kim, she wrote, "Twitter told me that they agreed that the six-year time frame works only if 1) their short term cash follow issues are addressed and 2) the exemption for stock options is extended to eight years." So Matz said she would "noodle on other financial mechanisms, including Mills Act Historic Tax Credit and New Market Tax Credits."

The public won't get a chance to weigh in on these details. On Feb. 4, when an OEWD staffer wrote to Matz that the City Attorney's Office recommended the legislation call for another public hearing after OEWD develops rules and regulations for implementing the policy, Matz replied simply, "No!" **SFBG**

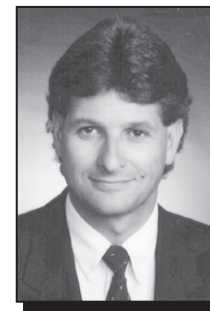
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TIM CREWS

One midsummer day in 2007, Sacramento Valley Mirror editor and publisher Tim Crews noticed smoke billowing into the air several miles away. A duck hunters cabin on an expansive Glenn County farm compound was ablaze. By the time the fire engine sirens had sounded, Crews was on his way there to find out what was happening.

The twice-weekly Sacramento Valley Mirror, which has a circulation of 3,000, is run by a small staff on a shoestring budget — but Crews' tenacity in the wake of the cabin fire has shown that it doesn't take a multimillion dollar budget to practice hard-hitting, investigative journalism that has an impact. If it hadn't been for Crews' comprehensive series, "Who Killed Bud?," Ivan "Bud" Foglesong's death in that fire might never have come under the microscope.

Following a yearlong investigation, the coroner's office ruled the death a suicide. "One of the lieutenants told the widow, 'We think Bud just went in there and poured a can of gas on his head and set himself on fire.'" Crews said. But he didn't buy it. "I said to them, why would he do that?"

With some digging, Crews learned that the man who perished in the fire had been a commercial pilot. Prior to that, "he'd been a military attaché, trusted with the nation's highest secrets," Crews said. "No drug or alcohol problems, physicals all the time. Not your typical unstable guy."

Using public records as well as information gathered through his own research and interviews, Crews published bits of information in the Valley Mirror that local law enforcement had apparently missed. There was ongoing strife between Foglesong and the district attorney's son, which had flared into violence directed at Foglesong at least once. The D.A. was Foglesong's brother-in-law and a neighbor on the family compound where the cabin burned. Crews talked to the nurses who gave Foglesong emergency medical care just before he died — telling them there had been an explosion. Crews spotlighted inconsistencies within the investigative reports, key evidence that went missing, and the demolition of the burnt cabin without a permit.

Faced with the dilemma that the evidence didn't add up, the sheriff coroner issued a new death certificate, characterizing it as an accident instead of a suicide. The Valley Mirror stories kept coming.



PHOTO BY KEENEY AND LAW

"Finally, the sheriff coroner, after two years, convenes a coroner's inquest," Crews recounted. That hadn't happened in Glenn County in 40 or 50 years. "The coroner's jury came back in an hour, 9-6 for death at the hands of another." The investigation is now at the state level.

The "Who Killed Bud?" series is just one example of Crews' journalistic grand slams. A different D.A. lost his bid for reelection, largely due to Valley Mirror coverage: "[He] said at a domestic violence meeting about a domestic violence victim, 'Lying bitch deserved to be beaten.' So we ran it in 40 point, top story," Crews said, "because it tells you very drastically what the establishment's attitudes are toward women. That just cannot be."

Other stories have landed him in hot water. Crews once spent five days in jail for refusing to give up a confidential source who told him that the new assistant sheriff had stolen a low-quality firearm. Crews has won numerous journalism awards and will be honored with the Norwin Yoffie Award for Career Achievement at the James Madison Awards ceremony. But his raw reportage has made enemies, too — including some within the local legal system. With his propensity to sue government agencies when they violate the California Public Records Act (CPRA) by withholding public records instead of honoring his sunshine requests, this dynamic has spelled trouble.

"His entire philosophy is to exploit the relatively strong public records laws in this state in order to provide his readers with the real deal on local government behavior," said Tom Newton, general counsel of the California Newspaper Publishers Association. "He doesn't take no for an answer."

Indeed, Crews prides himself on standing up to the powers-that-be. "Young reporters say, 'What's the most important word for journalists?' And I say, 'After compassion, defiance.'"

Yet the Valley Mirror now faces \$100,000 in legal fees because a local judge — once the subject of a Valley Mirror exposé — ruled that Crews' lawsuit against the Glenn County Board of Education for violating the CPRA was "frivolous." The steep price tag reflects the price of attorneys hired by local government to take on Crews in court.

"This newspaper can no more afford to pay a \$100,000 judgment than a fly," Crews said. "It's ruinous." The case is on appeal, but he views the ruling as "a very well orchestrated attempt to crush a paper that uses the CPRA aggressively. Because in fact, most of the conservative members of the community, including some in Democratic ranks, regard open government as just unwieldy and not good. Just not good for people to know all these things."

The case is on appeal. But if the ruling holds, it could set a very bad precedent, said Terry Francke of the watchdog group CalAware. "It puts any newspaper in a small

county in a very perilous state," he said.

Outside of court, Crews still enjoys a great deal of support and admiration — including from Foglesong's widow. "Because of Tim, this thing is going to get solved," said Jan Foglesong, who has since moved to Mississippi, where her husband was buried. "Because of him, we're getting a little justice for Bud." (Rebecca Bowe)

Legal Counsel

DUFFY CAROLAN

Duffy Carolan is a lawyer who understands how newspapers work. A journalism major at California Polytechnic State University, she started her career selling ads at the Fremont Argus and writing columns for the Alameda Times-Star. So when she graduated from the University of San Francisco Law School, it's no surprise that she wound up doing media law.

Her first law job was at the Oakland firm Crosby, Heafey, Roach & May, where she worked with previous FOI Award winners Tom Burke and John Carne. In 1998 she moved to Davis, Wright, Tremaine, where she specializes in libel, privacy, and communications law, representing many of the major news media outlets in the Bay Area (including the Guardian).

But Carolan is proudest of the work she's done — pro bono — for the Chauncey Bailey Project, which brought together reporters and editors from numerous newspapers and TV stations to help investigate the murder of the former editor of the Oakland Post. She helped the group get access to key documents and fought a gag order that would have limited the ability of the news media to obtain information.

She's handled a lot of big cases, but it's the little stuff that keeps her going. "What I enjoy most," she said, "is my daily interaction with reporters and the really small things that make their jobs a little bit easier." (Tim Redmond)

Journalist

PETER BYRNE

Investigative reporter Peter Byrne says his award-winning, multipart series "Investor's Club: How the Regents of the University of California Spin Public Funds into Private Profit" wouldn't have been possible without the California Public Records Act.

"It's the backbone of investigative journalism," he said of legislation that allowed him to



obtain 12,000 pages of records and databases from UC, the California Public Employees Retirement System, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, and the California Fair Political Practices Commission.

Byrne's research determined that UC invested billions of dollars into risky private equity funds and companies in which the regents in charge of making investment policy held significant financial interests. The story led UC Regent Richard Blum, who is married to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, to step down from the investment committee. It got the state Senate ordering an audit of the regents' financial practices and the regents promising to appoint a union member to sit on the investment advisory committee that oversees UC's \$60 billion-plus portfolio.

Byrne said he stumbled on the idea to do this series while giving a presentation at the UC Berkeley School of Journalism about an investigation of Feinstein's 2001-05 conflict of interest, which was due to Blum's stake in two major war contractors.

"I talked to the students about research techniques and public records," Byrne said, recalling how protests against UC raising fees were going on at UC Berkeley at the time. "And a few students said, 'Why don't you look into Mr. Blum in his capacity as a regent?'"

As Byrne dug into his research, he began to realize that UC had invested hundreds of millions of dollars in business deals that Blum Capital Partners was also investing in.

Byrne admits he reads thousands of pages of financial data that would make most people go crazy. "I'm like an idiot-savant. I enjoy reading them and finding the tidbits and putting them altogether." (Sarah Phelan)

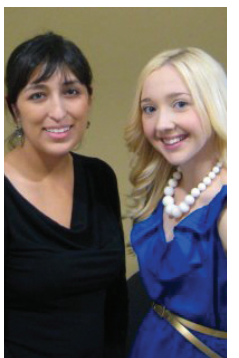
Citizens

ALICIA LEWIS AND ASHLI BRIGGS

Alicia Lewis and Ashli Briggs, recipients of the Citizens Award, had no idea that recovering documents from a Dumpster on the California State University, Stanislaus campus would land them at the center of a media spectacle.

When the university announced that GOP icon Sarah Palin had been selected to speak at the campus' 50th anniversary celebration, Lewis and Briggs raised objections on Facebook while sunshine advocates filed requests under the California Public Records Act for a copy of Palin's speaking contract.

Instead of honoring the information requests, CSU denied the existence of any such documents.



CONTINUES ON PAGE 16 »

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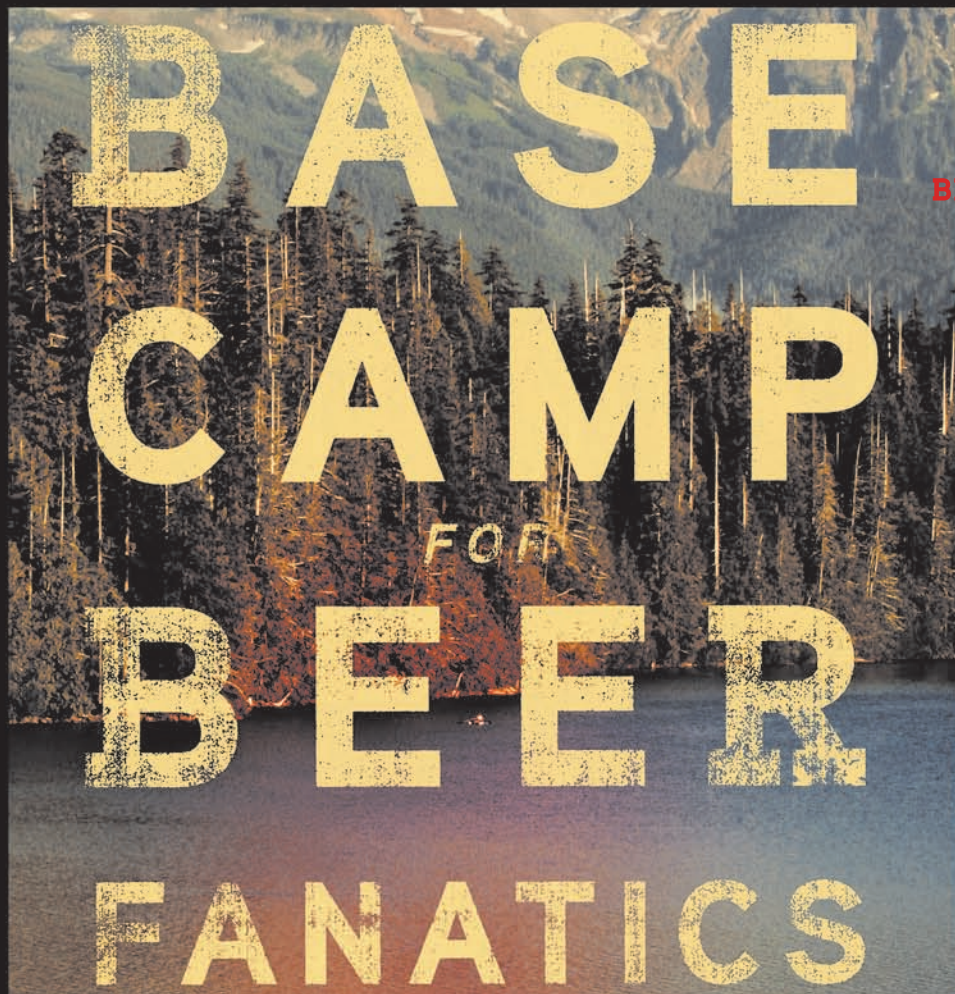
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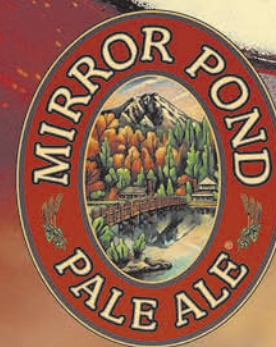
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James Madison Awards

CONT.»

But Briggs and Lewis discovered portions of the elusive contract after getting word that something fishy was going on. The campus was shut down for a furlough day yet there was clearly activity inside one building — and people were pitching things into a Dumpster, an anonymous tipster told them. “We both kind of looked at each other and said, ‘Let’s go down there,’ “ Briggs recalled.

Lewis said she never expected to find anything in the trash bin, but had to satisfy her curiosity. “We decided to pop open that lid,” she recalled. “It was overwhelming that there was actually important stuff in there.” Amid bags of shredded documents were pages four through nine of Palin’s contract, still intact.

State Sen. Leland Yee, who was among those seeking information, held a press conference with the two, and ultimately, the lucrative details of Palin’s contract were revealed.

“Anytime you put truth or information out there to be judged, you allow people to make their own assessments,” Lewis said. “And they can’t do that if the information isn’t out there.” (Rebecca Bowe)

Organization

LLOYD CHAPMAN AND THE AMERICAN SMALL BUSINESS LEAGUE

Small businesses make up 98 percent of all companies in the United States, employing the bulk of the population. But for decades, big, wealthy operations have been the recipients of federal money designed to go to small businesses.

For 20 years, Lloyd Chapman, president of the American Small Business League, has relentlessly worked to wrench from the government documents that reveal the diversion of billions of dollars a year in federal small business contracts to Fortune 500 companies and other large businesses.

Chapman said he entered this line of work “out of necessity,” frustrated after watching behemoth defense corporation Lockheed Martin win a small business contract over a legitimate small operation.

Using the Freedom of Information Act, Chapman learned that 600 large businesses were listed in the federal government’s small businesses database. He succeeded in prompting a series of investigations and the exposure of billions of dollars in fraud and abuse in federal small business contacting programs. His work has spurred more than 500 news stories.

Chapman says the solution is simple: stop awarding small business contracts to large corporations.

“It’s deficit neutral,” he says. “No new taxes. Just stop giving contracts to Fortune 500 companies.” (Heather Mack)



Journalist

AMY STANDEN

Last summer, KQED reporter Amy Standen was fishing for a story when she started to uncover some startling information on methyl iodide, a pesticide that was recently approved by California regulators for agricultural use. Standen spoke with an advisory panel of eight scientists about the health risks of methyl iodide and the discrepancy between the exposure levels the state and the scientists believed were safe.

The scientists’ anger at the Department of Pesticide Regulation’s decision to green light its use prompted Standen to start combing the highly technical documents used in the deliberation process.

“All I was ever doing was to understand, how did this happen?” Standen said.

The DPR, a part of the California Environmental Protection Agency, resisted releasing documents, but Standen kept pushing. “The deliberative process exemption to the California Public Records Act was a particular obstacle,” she said. “It was used to exclude exactly the sorts of documents that would have answered the central question: how were those exposure levels reached?”

She eventually was able to review the documents, noting that the opposition to it made “what we did get all the more valuable.”

Thanks to the evidence Standen uncovered, showing potential safety risk of exposure to methyl iodide and how the agency rejected the advice of its own scientists, environmental groups have filed a lawsuit challenging the approval. (Carly Nairn)



PHOTO BY GREG HABIBY

News Media

ASSOCIATE PRESS SACRAMENTO BUREAU

November was an especially demanding election season for the four reporters at the Sacramento bureau of the Associated Press. In addition to the reporting on day-to-day activities in the state Capitol, they were charged with making sense of a variety of statewide campaigns. And at the same time, Judy Lin, Don Thompson, Juliet Williams, and Samantha Young worked as team to release a series of remarkable stories on the secretive practices



of the state Legislature.

“We made the open records issue and sunshine issues a top priority and [this recognition] is the result of that,” Williams said. “Open records and freedom of information are a tenet of journalism and something we strive for all the time.”

When the Legislature passed the Public Records Act, it exempted itself. So the four reporters pressed public officials over the secret records and their tendency to hold closed meetings. Lin and Williams attempted to gain entry to a private lunch called by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for all 120 lawmakers to discuss solutions for the state’s profound challenges. The fallout of the refusal led to the governor’s pledge to keep future meetings open. Other stories by Young highlighted the murky compliance with public records requests. Thompson probed the excessive use of public funds by lawmakers on themselves.

Sacramento bureau editor Tom Verdin told us: “The credit goes to the reporters. I am fortunate to have a really strong and dedicated crew.” (Asaf Shalev)

Beverly Kees Educator Award

STEVE O'DONOGHUE

It’s not an easy job to train the next generation of journalists. Media professionals have seen the number of available jobs slashed in the last decade, along with salary levels. School newspapers have been shuttered by budget cuts and censored by overreaching administrators.

But a few notable educators have persevered, infusing thousands of young people with the desire to keep the populace informed. Steve O’Donoghue has devoted his life to that task, teaching for 33 years in Oakland, mostly at Fremont High School, where he founded the Media Academy and was the advisor to the student yearbook, newspaper, and magazine programs, as well as teaching media courses.

“I had seen scholastic journalism programs shrink in the schools and traditional organizations that had supported advisers and students shrivel up,” O’Donoghue told the Columbia Scholastic Press Association in 2008, when he received an award for his lifetime of work.

He added: “The world of scholastic journalism that had embraced me when I was a new teacher, assigned to a subject I had no training or preparation in, was gone. At the same time, I knew there was a greater awareness of the struggles of journalism in the schools on the part of the profession,

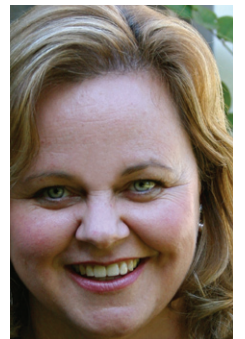


and more resources to train and assist advisers than ever before.” After retiring from classroom teaching in 2004, O’Donoghue worked at the Center for the Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State University, his alma mater. He also served on the Journalism Education Association’s board in Northern California for many years and helped create JEA’s national curriculum for mentoring journalism students. (Steven T. Jones)

Electronic Access

HOWARD MINTZ AND JULIA PRODIS

San Jose Mercury News legal affairs reporter Howard Mintz and crime reporter Julia Prodis won this award for their use of blogs and Twitter in court — an area where



public access has been reduced thanks to the Supreme Court’s decision to limit cameras in courthouse hallways and inside courtrooms.

“There’s an advantage when there are no cameras — there’s that much more craving for information,” Prodis said, noting that Mintz kick-started the Mercury News’ new media effort when he launched a blog in 2010 providing daily coverage of the federal challenge to the controversial Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in California.

“Howard’s blog got us started, and mine took us to a more sensational level,” Prodis said. At one point, Prodis wrote 70 blog posts in one day after she got permission from a judge to cover a love-triangle/murder-for hire case that lasted two months and eventually found Los Gatos businessman Paul Garcia, gunman Lucio Estrada, and Miguel Chaidez guilty of murdering restaurateur Mark Achilli.

“The judge approved, but only if we caused no distraction to the jury,” Prodis recalled, adding that she was concerned that a laptop keyboard would make keyboard sounds. “So it was really great that one of our managers went to Fry’s, bought an iPad, and handed it to me.”

The D.A.’s office followed her blog, as did the family of the accused. “A community of people who never spoke to each other in the courtroom became fully engaged on the blog,” she said.

“People want immediacy,” she added. “Especially in the courts — they want something right now.” (Sarah Phelan)

SPJ AWARDS DINNER

It’s not too late to purchase tickets for the March 16 James Madison Freedom of Information Awards banquet in San Francisco. For more information, visit spjnorcal.org/blog and scroll to “26th Annual James Madison Freedom of Information Awards.”

food + drink

Frances revels in smoky, earthy effects, raising simplicity to high art in dishes like grilled bavette steak, left.

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY RORY MCNAMARA



What's in a name?

By Paul Reidinger
paulr@sfbg.com

DINE What is the difference between Frances, Melissa Perello's wonderful, 15-month-old restaurant in the Castro, and Palencia, whose place it took? The interior design? This seems to have changed little, if at all. Frances' food is different, of course, an expertly sown patchwork quilt of influences and ingredients, whereas Palencia had given a stylish bistro treatment to the underrepresented and, to me, underappreciated foods of the Philippines.

But the most obvious difference is that Frances exists — and is packed — while Palencia is no more, and this has to do, I believe, with Perello herself. She brought her star power to a faceless block of 17th Street, and in so doing, she managed to put this handsome little space on the map. People had heard her name and the gilded words associated with it — Fifth Floor, Ron Siegel, Michael Mina, Charles Nob Hill — and this reputation has been enough, apparently, to induce patrons to seek a restaurant where they wouldn't necessarily expect to find one, on a residential, tree-lined stretch of pave-

ment far from other restaurants and, for that matter, other businesses.

When you step into Frances, from the lonely street into the lively dining room, long and narrow with lots of wood and cream tones, you have stepped from black to white, chilly to warm, and you are reminded of how commercial establishments tend to huddle together. It's unusual to find a business isolated in this way; it's like a secret, a great private party no one knows about, except that everyone seems to know about it. Thankfully, they've left their stretch limos at home.

If good things come in threes, then Frances completes a trifecta that also includes Firefly (opened 1993) and Delfina (1998). Three of the best restaurants in the city are neighborhood spots within walking distance of one another. They're also run by pedigreed chefs who've chosen (wisely) to invest themselves in ventures of a manageable, human scale, where details small and large can be controlled and the restaurant can actually be what the chef means it to be.

But our trifecta is more of an isosceles triangle, because — at least food-wise — Frances is nearer Firefly than Delfina: a wonderful Californian arabesque of this and

that, with a deep root in a rustic Franco-Italian tradition. The menu shows few to no Asian influences, and it also suggests that Perello loves smoky, earthy effects, as in the beignets (\$6.50), crisp doughnut balls flavored with applewood-smoked bacon and easy to dip in maple crème fraîche, though they didn't need to be dipped in anything.

Other whispers of smoke turned up in a soup (\$10) of puréed white beans and roasted fennel root with caramelized garlic, shreds of Tuscan kale, and chunks of chicken confit, and in the ragout of toasted farro accompanying the grilled bavette steak (\$25). As the steak aficionado put it, "the beef is fine" — a gorgeous rosy color that made up for its not-quite-tenderness, which we'd been advised of beforehand — "but this stuff is great!" Meaning the farro, enhanced by maitake mushrooms and baby fava microgreens; it was practically a meal in itself.

A proper seasonal menu for winter would naturally include mushrooms and citrus, and so we found black trumpet mushrooms contributing to a bowl of spugnole pasta (\$13) along with long coins of cotechino sausage and plenty of pecorino cheese: a marvelous little quartet of tang and earth. Citrus, meanwhile, assumed the form of Meyer lemon, whose juice electrified a salad of lovingly tender grilled calamari (\$6.50)

on a bed of wild arugula, shaved fennel, and radish. It also appeared as bits of satsuma mandarin orange in a salad of little-gems spears (\$12) laden with Dungeness crab meat and dressed with a tarragon vinaigrette.

The panisses (\$6.50) were extraordinary, and only in part because you rarely find them offered. They are a slight pain to make, but Frances' were beautifully formed and expertly fried to produce a good knobbly crust around a creamy interior. These, too, like the beignets, needed no dipping condiment, but the condiment presented with them, an aioli of calabrese peppers, was good enough (with a definite garlic-acid kick) to be taken straight up. This I did, discreetly I hope, with a spoon. And if the duck leg (\$23), braised in red wine and served atop a medley of butter beans, escarole, and pitted Sicilian olives, seemed slightly less extraordinary — less smokin' — that was only because there was more of it. **SFBG**

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Man w/ parking

By L.E. Leone

le.chicken.farmer@gmail.com

CHEAP EATS Dear Earl Butter,



Really??? Really, Earl? Really? Do you *really* think the source of your romantic problems is lack of parking? If

so, by buying a motorcycle, a car, and a parking space, won't you be setting yourself up for the opposite sort of problem: *too much* love.

As it is, almost every straight lady in San Francisco wants a piece of you, except for most of them. Still, that's a good 10 or 12 good women who don't need no parking spots or a motorcycle helmet to come see you, see?

So ... and don't forget, exactly one year ago the other day I myself proposed marriage to you in this very column because I thought it would make good copy. My being the consummate journalist aside, did I care if you had a parking spot, or wheels of any kind? No. I live downstairs.

Granted, not all women live downstairs from you. I'm just saying. The other night Hedgehog and me went out dancing to Cajun music. Technically, she didn't dance; she played the washboard, and I danced.

In short, we had the time of our lives and in the process got what would best be described as drunk. I invited the 87-year-old man I was dancing with to come home with us, just in case his last remaining unfulfilled fantasy was to watch two highly carnivorous wimmins in bed together, but he just wanted to keep dancing.

Hedgehog and me went to a grocery store across the street and we bought, among other things we might like to later lick off of each other's bodies, a bottle of wine. Being already sloppy, as soon as we got outside the store, I accidentally dropped the bag with the wine bottle in it. Her graceful little flower, Hedgehog calls me, mostly for throwing silverware around restaurants. Now this.

She wanted to just leave it, which is kind of a uniquely New Orleans approach to problem-solving. I hailed a cart collector and showed him the mess we'd made so at least they could clean up the glass. "No problem," he said. "Go get another bottle."

Not thinking enough to leave the soggy plastic bag there, I dripped purple back into the store to customer service. They said, "No problem. Go get another bottle."

Never even checked the receipt. Hedgehog could have gotten something twice as expensive, while I stood there bathing in fluorescence watching the moppper mop up my mess and thinking: "What a unique approach to public drunkenness."

But she didn't.

Yours,
Me

Dear Mrs. Butter,

That is great. Mod and Kat said you guys tried to go to the Brown Sugar Kitchen before, but could not get in. The thing being that it is always so crowded. We had to wait a little while at noonish on a Tuesday. But then we did get in and got to eat.

Kat had the chicken and waffles (\$15), Mod had the BBQ pork sandwich (\$9.50) and I got the blackened catfish (\$15). We all got the biscuit made with bacon, although I do not remember it being bacony, but it was good.

Kat was very excited about some football league she's joined and says she's never looked more forward to getting slaughtered on the field. She says she plays with gals who have never played football before, and it is the most fun she has ever had.

Mod learned how to do some weirdo therapy that brought all my knotted synapse packages to the fore before the food came. It also made my eyes tired and got me interested in the sidestep, like in gym class.

Kat thought the waffles were a little less than substantial, but I found them to be light and delightful. The pork sandwich seemed delicious, but Mod ho-hummed it a little. And I found the catfish to be very subtle, and in need of hot-sauce. We all agreed, good. But maybe not worth the wait.

Yers,
Earl SFBG

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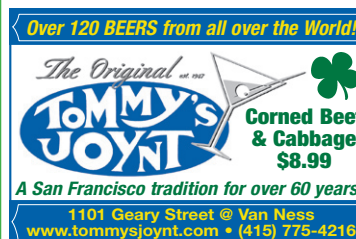


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st. patrick's day

One of our favorite holidays is coming up - and it's more than just a great excuse to party, it's also a celebration of our grand history. St. Patrick's Day honors the fact that we have enough Irish spirit in San Francisco to make any other city green with envy. And of course we have more Irish bars and St. Patty's events than a leprechaun has Lucky Charms. So get out there and be a part of it all!



GUARDIAN

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN PICKS



WEDNESDAY MARCH 16

EVENT

“Nerd Nite SF No. 10: Visualization of Science, Undersea Internet, and the Art of Videogames”

Get your geek on! Nerd Nite, a relaxed celebration of the cerebral, features science-centric presentations that will increase your already genius-level IQ, you MENSA member, you. Take your first sip of alcohol and listen to lectures like “The Coolest A/V Club in the Universe: Science Visualization at the California Academy of Sciences” by Jon Britton, senior systems engineer and production engineering manager of electronics engineering and science visualization (that’s a mouthful) at the academy; “20,000 Leagues Under the TCP: The Undersea Internet” by Chris Woodfield, senior network engineer for Yahoo!; and “Sorry, but Videogames Are Art” by acclaimed technology journalist Alex Handy. **(Jen Verzosa)**

8 p.m., \$8
Rickshaw Stop
155 Fell, SF
(415) 861-2011
www.sf.nerdnite.com

MUSIC

“(Pre) St. Paddy’s Day Punk Bash XI”

Tradition dictates that the St. Paddy’s Day Punk Bash is held on, well, March 17. But this year, there was a Steve Ignorant-playing-Crass-songs show (don’t call it a reunion!) scheduled for March 17, so veteran local promoter Scott Alcoholocaust — noting the potential conflict of mohawked interests — scooted his Paddy party to the day prior. Alas, Crass ran into visa troubles and had to reschedule its gig for later this spring. So get your punk fix tonight; tomorrow, you can stay home and recover (suggested activity: watching all the *Leprechaun* movies) while the amateurs crowd the pubs. The bill includes SF’s own tongue-in-cheek rockers Crosstaps and “all-zombie” Dead Boys tribute act UNdead Boys. Magically delicious! **(Cheryl Eddy)**

With Ruleta Rusa, Face the Rail, and Street Justice
8 p.m., \$8
Elbo Room
647 Valencia, SF
(415) 552-7788
www.elbo.com

THURSDAY MARCH 17

EVENT

“How Wine Became Modern” featuring Pop-Up Magazine

If you prefer wine to green beer on St. Patrick’s Day, head to SFMOMA for a wine-infused installment of its Now Playing series, featuring Pop-Up Magazine in a new, between-issues format, “Sidebar.” Unlike normal magazines with a shelf life, each issue of Pop-Up takes the form of a live performance presented to an audience in real time. This issue discusses wine culture, science, history, politics, and humor in conjunction with the museum’s current exhibition, “How Wine Became Modern.” The evening includes a screening of Brian De Palma’s *Dionysus in 69* (1970) and a rooftop bacchanal-themed event by Meatpaper magazine. Bonus: admission is half-price after 6 p.m. Thursday nights. **(Julie Potter)**

6 p.m., \$9
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 Third St., SF
(415) 357-4000
www.sfmoma.org

FRIDAY MARCH 18

DANCE

Dance Anywhere

A few years ago dancer-choreographer Beth Fein asked herself: “What if the world paused to dance?” It certainly couldn’t hurt. In the Bronx, hip-hop helped reduce violence. More recently, all of Cairo danced on Tahrir Square. Fein elicited enough of a response that people around the globe will gather for one big communal dance. You can “dance anywhere” on your own or join kindred spirits. In San Francisco, find Alyce Finwall (Geary and Grant streets), the Foundry (Civic Center BART), Kara Davis and Agora Project (Lincoln Park), or Project Trust (Togonon Gallery). In Oakland see Carolyn Lei-Lanilau (Bosko Picture and Framing store), Destiny Arts Center (at home), and Eric Kupers’ Dandelion Dance Theater (Frank Ogawa Plaza). For additional Bay Area participants consult the website. **(Rita Felciano)**

Noon, free
Various Bay Area locations
(415) 706-7644
www.danceanywhere.org

DANCE

Nederlands Dans Theater

The elite dance creatures of Nederlands Dans Theater visit Berkeley to perform *Whereabouts Unknown*, the work of former artistic director Jiri Kylián, and *Silent Screen*, a collaboration by resident choreographers Paul Lightfoot and Sol León set to the music of Philip Glass. Known for its gorgeously trained artists, the company pairs the work of NDT’s longtime leader alongside choreography by the company’s next generation of dance makers, giving audiences an idea of this fine group’s trajectory. In addition, artistic director Jim Vincent (previously stateside directing Hubbard Street Dance Chicago) offers a free public lobby talk with Cal Performances’ Kathryn Roszak Sat/19 at 5 p.m. **(Potter)**

Fri/18–Sat/19, 8 p.m., \$34–\$72
Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft at Telegraph, Berk.
(510) 642-9988
www.calperfs.berkeley.edu

MUSIC

Devo

With nearly 15 years between releases leading up to 2010’s

Something for Everybody, it’s probably an understatement to say that Devo has slowed down considerably since its heyday throughout the 1970s and ’00s. Regardless, the band is still synonymous with the idiosyncratic new wave and synth-punk it helped create those many years ago. Ringleader Mark Mothersbaugh has rekindled the group’s flare for sci-fi kitsch, surreal humor, and of course, the costumes, in recent appearances and the group seems rejuvenated with touring drummer Josh Freese (Vandals, A Perfect Circle) on board. With talks of a possible Devo Broadway musical in the works, it seems the group possibly has a few more tricks up its oddball sleeve. **(Landon Moblad)**

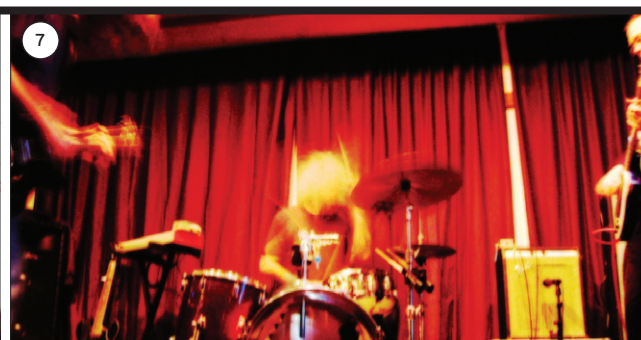
With the Octopus Project
9 p.m., \$37.50–\$99.50
Warfield
982 Market, SF
(415) 345-0900
www.thewarfieldtheatre.com

DANCE

RAWdance

RAWdance, also known as Ryan T. Smith and Wendy Rein, may be best known for their Concept Series, in which popcorn and new dance packs them in. (It is also a place

Welcome to Spaceship Earth. Please enjoy its dynamic equilibrium, finite resources, and infallible interdependency.



where a local critic was once hit by a flying ice cream bar.) The work shown is usually “in progress.” An ODC Theater Residency has now enabled the two artists to finish one of their tentative excursions. The full-evening *Hiding in the Space Between* — live dance and LED projections — takes on the complications, discoveries, and shifting priorities that an exploding range of technology imposes on us. Human beings have always been social creatures, but what kind of animals are we turning into? **(Felciano)**

Fri/18–Sun/20, 8 p.m.,
\$15–\$18
ODC Theater
3153 17th St., SF
(415) 863-9834
www.odctheater.org

SATURDAY MARCH 19

MUSIC

Greg Ginn and the Royal We
Full disclosure: I have only the vaguest impression of what the erstwhile Black Flag guitarist’s latest project actually sounds like (short answer: weird and stony), and my preliminary Internet sleuthing suggests that nobody else seems to know too much,

either. What’s certain, however, is that any band with Greg Ginn at the helm will make for an interesting experience — consider the countless stories in circulation about people who walked into a Taylor Texas Corrugators show hoping to hear “Police Story,” only to be held hostage by a nightmarish jam band for over an hour. Here’s hoping Ginn’s latest project lives up to the jarring strangeness of its immediate predecessors. **(Tony Papanikolas)**

With Big Scenic Nowhere and Glitter Wizard
9 p.m., \$8
Thee Parkside
1600 17th St., SF
(415) 252-1330
www.theeparkside.com

PERFORMANCE

“Jay and Silent Bob Get Old”
Since their first appearance in Kevin Smith’s 1994 film *Clerks*, the characters of Jay and Silent Bob have gone on to achieve cult status — ever though Smith’s alter ego doesn’t speak much and his overly-verbose partner, portrayed by Jason Mewes, is a foul-mouthed, obnoxious punk. Smith and Mewes have revived the hilarious duo once again; brandishing the tagline “Every saga has a middle

age,” they’ve started taping a live podcast, “Jay and Silent Bob Get Old,” riffing on just about everything funny thing you could imagine. When the show comes to the city tonight, just imagine you’re standing in front of that old Quick Stop in Jersey and let the raunchy tirades roll. **(Sean McCourt)**

9 p.m., \$59.50
Warfield
982 Market, SF
(415) 345-0900
www.thewarfieldtheatre.com

SUNDAY MARCH 20

MUSIC

Carlton Melton
Welcome to Spaceship Earth. Please enjoy its dynamic equilibrium, finite resources, and infallible interdependency. Heavy shit? Maybe. But engineer and visionary Buckminster Fuller had reality dialed, helping popularize these concepts and designing the eco-before-“eco” geodesic dome. Time travel 40 years to today, where the five members of Carlton Melton have pioneered “dome rock” from the acoustic womb of their spherical abode on the Mendocino coast. No rehears-

als, studios, or second takes; all dome-inspired improvisation, experimentation, and Floydian trippiness. Bucky would be proud. And beyond reverberations from dome sweet dome, how could you flake on a stony Sunday afternoon BBQ with Acid King? **(Kat Renz)**

With Acid King and Qumram
Orphics
2 p.m., \$8
Bottom of the Hill
1233 17th St., SF
(415) 621-4455
www.bottomofthehill.com

MONDAY MARCH 21

MUSIC

Destroyer
Dan Bejar is never quite what he seems. He’s a pivotal member of indie talent union the New Pornographers, but the nine albums he’s released as Destroyer stands to eclipse that collective effort. The name may invoke metal, but that’s the one popular genre that Bejar seems to borrow from the least. *Kaputt* in particular, the latest and best Destroyer album since 2001’s *Streethawk: A Seduction*, finds Bejar in territory that’s undeniably

smooth. Smooth jazz smooth, but adding musical nuance and lyrical mystery in a way that hasn’t been so successful since the ’80s (or arguably, ever). If the eight-piece orchestra on this tour aims to destroy anything, it’s expectations. **(Prendiville)**

With the War on Drugs, Devon Williams, and DJ Britt Govea
8 p.m., \$16
Great American Music Hall
859 O’Farrell, SF
(415) 885-0750
www.gamh.com **SFBG**

The Guardian listings deadline is two weeks prior to our Wednesday publication date. To submit an item for consideration, please include the title of the event, a brief description of the event, date and time, venue name, street address (listing cross streets only isn’t sufficient), city, telephone number readers can call for more information, telephone number for media, and admission costs. Send information to Listings, the Guardian Building, 135 Mississippi St., SF, CA 94107; fax to (415) 487-2506; or e-mail (paste press release into e-mail body — no text attachments, please) to listings@sfbg.com. Digital photos may be submitted in jpeg format; the image must be at least 240 dpi and four inches by six inches in size. We regret we cannot accept listings over the phone.

(1) “Nerd Nite SF #10” (see Wed/16); (2) Crosstops (see Wed/16); (3) “How Wine Became Modern Featuring Pop Up Magazine” (see Thurs/17); (4) Dance Anywhere (see Fri/18); (5) Devo (see Fri/18); (6) RAWdance (see Fri/18); (7) Carlton Melton (see Sun/20); (8) Destroyer (see Mon/21)

DANCE ANYWHERE PHOTO BY MATT HABER; RAWDANCE PHOTO BY RJ MUNA; CARLTON MELTON PHOTO BY BIRGIT BRUNAR; DESTROYER PHOTO BY TED BOIS

arts + culture

Men, refresh your outlook (and outfit) at Allsaints Spitalfields (left), Nice Collective MSU (center) and Sui Generis.

ALLSAINTS AND NICE PHOTOS BY DAVID SCHNUR, SUI GENERIS PHOTO BY MIGUEL FLORES



Seven for spring

New local menswear shopping options teem with wit and savvy

By Marke B.
marke@sfbg.com

FASHION/SHOPPING Everything seems so chill in men's street wear lately, no?



The harsh electro neons and jittery MySpace fabrics of the past few years have gone the way of shutter shades and full-print tees. Flashiness — on the dance floor, on the streets, online — is fading into a style of subtle sparks, complex yet unfussy, mixing high-tech winks with a comfy, endlessly expandable base. Menswear is going deep on us, and taking our sensibilities with it: if you're still using irony to justify your outfit, then you need to back slowly away from your Tumblr and take a look around.

This makes it harder to binge shop for your wardrobe at thrift stores, of course, unless you've got a great connection to a super-hip tailor who won't go overboard. And I fear that by jettisoning the devil-may-care attitude of WTF bricolage ensembles, we're quaffing any sense of humor altogether. Still, the burst of, dare I say, modesty after a decade of gaudy attention-whoring comes as a

relief. It feels like menswear in 2011 just totally deleted the comments section and moved on.

Another worry, though: how much does all this cost? It's true that the new look and feel hearkens back to the old model of class, taste, and, yes, accounts. Fortunately, you can get by just fine matching neutral-leaning thrift and vintage finds — some holes or split seams, no problem — with newer touches. Yay for casual deconstruction! Lately San Francisco, previously by no means an oasis of menswear shopping, has opened up in the cool men's streetwear department, adding to its handful of staples (Nomads, Upper Playground, Density, Unionmade, Azalea, Brooklyn Circus, etc.) a batch of new places and sites to search for spring inspiration. Below are some of my faves.

► SUI GENERIS "ILLE"

This is the coolest place to vintage shop in the city right now. Castro men's designer consignment boutique Sui Generis isn't new, but it just moved, doubling its size as well as its offerings, and adding "Ille," a Latin masculine declension, after its name. (Owners Miguel Lopez and Gabriel

Yanez have turned the old location, at 2265 Market St., into "Illa," a gorgeous upscale women's consignment shop.) I'm far from a label whore, but I can appreciate when my friends gush over the selection of repriced Prada, etc. on offer here, all of it chosen with an excellent eye. Beyond the brand worship, you'll find everything you need to construct a look here — just add your own futuristic flourishes — and the prices aren't too shabby. 2265 Market, SF. (415) 437-2231, www.suigenerisconsignment.com

► NICE COLLECTIVE MSU

Just down the street from Sui Generis is this rad pop-up shop from the boys at the fantastic local Nice Collective label, showcasing their particular genius for deconstructed clothing that radiates raffish gentility. (I'm living for their anarcho-utopian push-up cargo pants.) The tech details in most of their designs are fascinating, and the interior of this shop, with its disassembled drop ceiling, billowing canvas tunnel entrance, and digital projections, is a work of art in itself. Nice Collective is a real, big time design house, though, so expect related price points and quality. 2111 Market, SF. (415) 200-5322, www.nicecollective.com

► HANGR 16

Go to this just-opened Mission District store if only to bask in the incredible friendliness, not pushiness, of the people who work there.

As well as carrying unique handcrafted designs from local design wunderkinds Turk + Taylor — I'm still drooling over this one heavy felt Army jacket there — Hangr 16 offers an array of super-affordable button-ups, western shirts, plaid flannels, jeans, and nifty tees in its immaculate little white hangar of a space. More shopping options in the Mission? Oh yeah.

3128 16th St., SF. (415) 626-5522.
www.facebook.com/hangr16

► BUSH + LEAVENWORTH

A smooth take on classic Americana from this online design house, founded by Neth Nom at his apartment guess where. Light plaid button-ups and some mouthwatering tee designs based on chess pieces (queen for me!) are highlights, as is the ultra-sporty nylon Fillmore windbreaker, combining Members Only stylishness with team jacket masculinity. www.bushandleavenworth.com

► MISSION WORKS

Bike enthusiasts with chronic Chrome fatigue should fixie-fly to this hidden little warehouse outlet immediately. Beautifully crafted messenger bags and backpacks in unique styles are the draw, but the supplementary Quoc Pham, DZR, and house footwear, plus a good selection of outerwear, transcend utility to style bliss. 40 Rondel Place, SF. (415) 864-7225, www.missionworkshop.com

► REVOLVER

I am crying, weeping with want, over this kickass pair of Yuketen Maine Guide OX Red shoes that look like Dockside on steroids. They are \$440 at Revolver, a cute little joint that just opened in Lower Haight, and, alas, I sold my first-born for a baggie in the 1990s. But I am going to try them on with a pair of \$199 Denham Mohawk chinos and a post-prepster \$160 ecru Vassan 2-Tone jacket and yacht rock the fuck out for a few minutes. 136 Fillmore, SF. (415) 871-0665, www.revolverssf.com

► ALLSAINTS SPITALFIELDS

I really hate to recommend a chain, even one from Britain that's just launching on these shores. But hey, I can't afford anything here anyway (basic shirts start at around \$140), so I'm going to tell you to go and check it out, if only because of the stunning interior that mixes steampunk accents with actual Victoriana. The clothes represent the complete yet fascinating gentrification of a certain postapocalyptic Burning Man aesthetic (the one without the sex clowns and fun fur). Everything is perfectly distressed — work boots, for instance, that gleam vermilion in certain slants of light. 140 Geary, SF. (415) 762-0702, www.allsaints.com **SFBG**



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From Meg Stuart's *Auf den Tisch!* Photo: Maria Anjuera de Sojo

IN THE YBCA FORUM, MAR 25-26

MEG STUART: AUF DEN TISCH! / AT THE TABLE!

The Bay Area premiere of *Auf den Tisch!*, an interactive experience by internationally acclaimed dancer/choreographer Meg Stuart for which performers and audience quite literally take a seat at the table.

REFLECT CONSIDERING THE PERSONAL

IN THE GALLERIES, THRU JUN 12

SONG DONG

DAD AND MOM, DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, WE ARE ALL WELL

A solo exhibition by Chinese conceptual artist Song Dong, including videos, photography, a newly commissioned work and the much heralded large-scale installation *Waste Not*.

IN THE ROOM FOR BIG IDEAS, THRU JUN 12

DAILY LIVES

CURATED BY ABBY CHEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE CHINESE CULTURE CENTER

Four Chinese and Chinese-American artists examine the reality and occasional sublimity of everyday existence through a variety of sensory experiences.

IN THE GALLERIES, THRU MAR 27

JENNIE C. JONES: COUNTERPOINT

Art history, music history and African-American history intersect through audio, sculpture and drawing.

SOAR THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

IN THE VIEWING CORRIDOR, THRU MAR 27

LAUREN DICIOCCIO: REMEMBER THE TIMES

Lauren DiCioccio creates soft sculptures of objects disappearing from the everyday, making such mundane objects as newspapers and plastic shopping bags precious and worthy of nostalgia.

TIX/INFO: 415.978.ARTS or www.YBCA.org

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trash pop culture news, notes, and reviews



Oh, those pesky fire-breathers: a character takes on a you-know-what in *Dragon Age II*. | PHOTO COURTESY OF BIOWARE

Fantastic fantasy

Dragon Age II

BioWare/Electronic Arts

(PC, Xbox 360, Playstation 3)

GAMER When they first announced a new game called *Dragon Age:*

Origins, the prizewinning developers at BioWare were enjoying the success of *Mass Effect*, their wildly popular space opera, which had just introduced the public to the intergalactic potential of the studio's imagination by creating an entire sci-fi universe from scratch. If *Mass Effect* was all about the future of role-playing games, *Origins* was all about their past. Almost defiantly traditional, even down to its title, the game embraced shopworn role-playing game tropes like dwarfs, elves, rogues, and locked chests with the tender respect of a closet-cleaning teenager encountering a childhood toy.

Set in a world of high fantasy that simultaneously revered and reinvented the genre's many archetypes, the series also resurrected the company's most popular play style: players control one hero and three companions, switching between them at will. The fighting can be paused at any time to better coordinate your party's actions.

Despite having many virtues, *Origins* was marred by its imperfections. Its art directors woefully misinterpreted their retro mandate (the loading screen featured what was effectively a giant,

rotating tribal tattoo). The scope of the game world, along with the geographic and interspecies conflicts that underpinned it, was unevenly developed. An overabundance of meaningless dialogue meant that the urgency of the plot was often lost amid the ramblings of boring NPCs. Most damningly, the combat felt strangely weightless — allies and adversaries seemed to stand there swinging mightily at each other until someone fell down.

Dragon Age II is as elaborately polished and stage-managed as its predecessor was rough-hewn and idiosyncratic. The game's opening sequence drops you right onto the battlefield, showing off a redesigned game engine that makes combat at once visceral, gory, and kinetic. Even while playing as a mage, zapping enemies at range with your staff, you feel as if your avatar is breaking a sweat. The characters' special abilities look legitimately powerful, sending foes flying or julienning them into a shower of immaculately rendered giblets.

The story follows a family of refugees called the Hawkes, whose flight from their homeland of Ferelden parallels the events of the first game. Arriving in the city of Kirkwall, they are quickly confronted with the game's major theme: dystopia. Founded centuries ago by an unpleasant-sounding empire of slave-owning magicians, Kirkwall is marked by strife,

xenophobia, and violence.

Much of the conflict centers around BioWare's carefully crafted axes of enmity. The city's human residents resent the influx of Fereldan refugees. The local elves are considered second-class citizens, and summarily abused. The series' treatment of magic is particularly fascinating, pitting a self-righteous order of Templars (who think that the magic-adept are dangerous and should be controlled by force) against the mages themselves (who bridle at the Templars' pious enthrallment).

Players will experience Kirkwall's vicissitudes both through their own story and through their relationships with a fascinating cast of characters. Rich or poor, straight or gay, insouciant she-pirate or revenge-hungry ex-slave, the city's inhabitants spring to vibrant life from the pen of BioWare's inimitable writing team. The entire narrative is even structured around an ingenious frame story.

Try too hard to scratch beneath the game's admittedly pretty surface, however, and you'll be dealt a stinging rebuke. Though its appearance is universally stunning, *Dragon Age II* compensates for *Origins*' excessive ambition by limiting itself to a narrow range of environments, enemy types, and mission structures. In 12 hours with the game, a player will clear out the same identical cave five or six times. Though the cut scene and conversation dialogue is excellent, game play is too often comprised of "travel here, travel there," with the occasional ambush thrown in just to whet your appetite, your sword, and, thanks to the series' distinctive blood-spatter graphical effect, pretty much everything else you have on.

If you can ignore some repetition (you want me to save *another* wayward, magic-addled youth?) and concentrate on the game's positive qualities (there are many), *Dragon Age II* will provide some 40 hours of enjoyment. BioWare has taken an old role-playing dog and taught it a number of impressive number of new tricks. Unfortunately, "roll over" and "shake" are often overshadowed by "fetch," and sometimes, "play dead." (Ben Richardson)



“Even if everybody hated my films, I would keep doing them,” says Canadian filmmaker and actor Xavier Dolan. | PHOTO COURTESY MIFILIFILMS INC.

Xavier university

The young multi-talent chats up *Heartbeats*

By Louis Peitzman
arts@sfbg.com

FILM “I’m not stupid.”



For most filmmakers, that goes without saying, but Xavier Dolan is careful to acknowledge both his talents and limitations. The 21-year-old French Canadian auteur, who wrote, directed, and starred in 2009’s *I Killed My Mother*, returns with the romantic farce *Heartbeats*. “I honestly did the film knowing that I would obviously not invent anything,” Dolan admits. “This is not revolutionary directing or writing.”

He is not, as he maintains, stupid: Dolan insists that only an ignorant filmmaker would write a story of unrequited love and label it unique. While the style of *Heartbeats* is very much Dolan’s creation, the film and its director are conscious of their influences.

“Everything in cinema, for me, has been done before the ’30s,” Dolan says. “And everything since has been repeated or recycled or renewed in some way. I’m not going to pretend to invent anything.”

Rather than run from the comparisons, Dolan embraces them, peppering *Heartbeats* with homages to the films, art, and literature that

have inspired him. While the story is simple — friends Francis (Dolan) and Marie (Monia Chokri) both fall for stunning stranger Nicolas (Niels Schneider) — Dolan’s visual references give his film weight. As with his first movie, he draws from personal experience. But *Heartbeats* is more an amalgamation of stories than Dolan’s singular experience.

“*I Killed My Mother* is, like, 97 percent autobiographical,” he notes. “The three percent is just to please my mother, because she doesn’t want me to say it’s 100 percent true. *Heartbeats* is not as autobiographical in the sense that it’s inspired from various love stories that I have recycled for the film.”

In some ways, *Heartbeats* is familiar territory — and not only because Dolan once again takes on writing, directing, and acting duties. The filmmaker made sure it was different enough to show his progress but still within his sensibilities.

“I didn’t want to go over this mother-and-son-bond-thing again, so that people would say I was repeating myself,” Dolan explains. “But I still had the feeling that I had to stay close to my skin in order to interest people and not look like I was talking about shit I didn’t know.”

As for taking on multiple roles, Dolan concedes a love of creative

control, but he also notes that Canadian cinema is more open to a singular vision than America’s collaborative model. Though he is quick to commend those who helped him on *Heartbeats*, the end result is the film he wanted to make.

Sometimes, multitasking is a matter of necessity. “It’s a pleasure for me to act,” Dolan says. “It’s my first job and my first passion, but I’m not acting anymore. People won’t employ me. I’m the only person who will give myself a job as an actor.”

In talking to Dolan, one finds a fascinating blend of humility and ego, both linked by his sincerity. The filmmaker speaks with a rare openness, an honesty that infuses his films and elevates them past typical reflections of 20-something angst. I’d argue that the success of Dolan’s efforts is thanks, in part, to his persistent self-awareness.

“People are saying that any other student could do as well with an HD cam, and yeah, sure, I guess they could,” he says. “What can I do? My goal in life is not to convince and seduce and be loved by everyone — I’m not a fascist. I just want to do my films, and if people follow, I will be pleased.”

Which is not to say Dolan suffers from a lack of pride or ambition. “I’m a very narcissistic person,” he continues, “and I think that even if everybody hated my films, I would keep doing them.” **SFBG**

HEARTBEATS opens Fri/18 in Bay Area theaters.

Raise Your Tiny Paws to Heaven

March 5TH - MAY 6TH

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ARTS + CULTURE



Sacred sprays: Left, proposed plans for the recreated 1791 Ohlone-Mission Dolores mural. Right, a priest paints blessings onto Caledonia Alley's aerosol-made Jesus.

PROPOSED IMAGE OF MURAL BY BEN WOOD AND NORMAN NEUERBURG

Holy paint rollers

Mission street art takes a turn for the sainted

By Caitlin Donohue
caitlin@sfbg.com

CULTURE In the Mission there are few things more — and less — sacred than a mural. Every day in the neighborhood a communion is performed:

new street art is produced, and in exchange, other street art is mangled, marred by tags scrawled by unimpressed or jealous (depends on who you ask) hands. But some wall pieces in this storied land of concrete canvases are holy in more than just the figurative sense. Two neighborhood mural projects in particular fit this frame, one blessed by priests and one possessing clues about the earliest days of the Mission Dolores.

Caledonia Alley runs alongside St. John the Evangelist's Episcopal Church. Jesus looks down on the narrow street, which was once so thoroughly covered in needles that Elaine Lew, who was born and raised in a house on Caledonia, says, "You couldn't drive your car down it because you'd pop your tires." Every Sunday, families lined up for the free food the church distributed, sharing the space with people openly selling and using drugs.

But since Jesus came to the alley,

things have been different. Street artist Dan Plasma happened upon Caledonia looking for fresh wall space to paint, and proposed to the church that he cover their heavily-tagged alley wall with something space-specific. St. John's acquiesced, so Plasma and his friends, respected artists Mike Giant and Mark Bode, went to work on a spray paint tableau of the crucifixion, with St. John and other biblical figures in supporting roles.

"It really made a big difference in the alley," says Lew, who notes that the blatant drug activity has subsided in the year since the crew completed the piece. The church recognized the change, and the rector let Plasma know that it would be officially blessing the mural in a ceremony. "I called up Mark and Mike and told them, 'It's going to get sprinkled with holy water. We gotta put on some clean shirts,'" says Plasma. A year later, the wall is still utterly free of the tags that go on so many other works.

Funds allowing, a miracle of a different sort will soon be watching over the neighborhood's only weekly farmers market. Artist Ben Wood has made a habit of finding our city's little-known historical perspectives and presenting them to the San Francisco of today. In 2004, he spent the Fourth of July projecting images

of the Ohlone onto Coit Tower and Andrew Galvan, Mission Dolores' curator — and direct descendent of Ohlone who converted at the church — told Wood there was an original Ohlone mural hidden behind the mission's central *reredos*, or altar.

"It's been hidden for 200 years," Wood says in a phone interview. "The possibility of recreating the mural for the public — it would allow people to ask questions about life back then." He and a Presidio historian set to work documenting the piece, dropping a camera into the crawl space between mural and altar and eventually coming up with a composite image of a spiraling, curving design of purple lines and dagger-pierced hearts they hope to recreate on a wall of the historic Mission Market that abuts the relatively new, open-air Mission Community Market.

"The mural is really telling about the tradition of being a muralist in San Francisco," says Jet Martinez, street artist and central figure in the Clarion Alley collective, whom Wood selected to work on the piece because of his mastery of intricate patterns in past murals of Oaxacan embroidery and prehistoric plant life. Their team created a Kickstarter account (www.kickstarter.com/profile/missiondoloresmural) for the project and hope to collect the majority of the \$8,000 needed for the work by the end of the month. If they succeed, it will add another dimension to the canonization of street art in one of *muralismo*'s most well-known neighborhood of galleries. **SFBG**



Josh T. Pearson (and his 10-year-old beard) journey home to Texas for a fistful of South by Southwest gigs before his European tour. Alas, ye faithful, no Bay Area visit is yet in the works.

Songs of flesh and faith

Revelations from Josh T. Pearson, last of the genuine country gentlemen

By **Kandia Crazy Horse**
arts@sfbg.com

MUSIC Some cowboy angels have been crying into their beer for salvation; meantime, some of us singing cowgirls who are also in struggle push onward to save ourselves. Texan-in-exile Josh T. Pearson's new *Last of the Country Gentlemen* (Mute) is very much the answer record for that divide, its harrowing, beautiful 60 minutes transmuting into a sonic angel and devil's advocate for both sides.

On hearing the disc's seven songs — or, as when seeing Pearson live a few weeks past at Brooklyn's Bell House, where he opened with the one-two punch of "Sweetheart I Ain't Your Christ" and "Thou Art Loosed" — you might be inclined to label the work mere post-breakup bittersweets, or worse, sexist. Yet you would be woefully wrong, akin to those scene-making hipsters at the Bell House who refused to pocket their cell phones and thus did not respect the artist or the hush required to truly hear the songs. You would not be awake to the fact that Brother Pearson's preaching the (female) listener toward empowerment. He fled Sam the Sham, crossing the pond for refuge, solace, and space, but did not find old world streets paved with gold, and ultimately he was stalked by

heartache, firewater, and despair. No one else can love you into wholeness. Reckon I don't know if Jesus saves; down here, it appears nobody can save your soul but you — savior self.

In my recent long seasons of darkness, this is the hardest life lesson I was forced to learn. And so the acute sadness of Josh T. Pearson the artist — once weighted with the spoils and pressures of one anointed as sonic savior, courtesy of his prior trio Lift to Experience and its lone apocalyptic recording *The Texas-Jerusalem Crossroads* (2001) — and his seven devastating accounts of love gone wrong, about the chains of dissipation and loss of mind and self, resonate with me in ways that cannot be reduced to printed matter nor speech. After a decade of inner turbulence and music's collective loss of grace, here, at last, is a recording made by a grown-ass man.

With their length and delicacy, unvarnished instrumentation — chiefly, Pearson's voice and guitar, recorded over two days in Berlin with strings added a few months later — the songs of *Last of the Country Gentlemen* will doubtless cause some to resist, too cowardly to engage with pain. They need to recognize that Pearson is strong enough to balance (gallows) wit with generous depth and unflinching modesty. See "Honeymoon is Great, I Wish You Were Her," or even the tortured meshes of "Sorry With A Song," with

its "Last time you left I got my drunk ass whupped in a fight/ My whole life's been one clichéd country unfinished line after line after line." On stage at the Bell House, he joked about expecting to see more beards in the Brooklyn crowd, and noted that the 10-year length of his own mirrored his "absence." Awake, awake...know his embodiment of the divine.

The portrait Pearson is gentlemanly enough to present: a young Ugly American seeking detachment abroad, unraveling, and painstakingly slaying dragons to evolve and become a better human. Yes, there are ghost notes between his being the son of a Southern preacher man and myself being the granddaughter, niece, cousin of same; a shared lore of traditions and the Word communicates beneath the surface of this record (and I nigh passed out when he seamlessly recuperated the Melodians-minted "Rivers of Babylon" into his oeuvre live last week).

It matters not that Pearson focused on busking and drifting across western Europe and the isles, surfacing only once in the past decade with a (fitting) cover of Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and continuing to sit on a trove of unreleased material. In fleeing the horrors of Bush America, he reconnected with the traditions of his own soil and kinfolk (as slyly/sadly limned on the single,

"Country Dumb") and went through them changes to fiercely mature as songcatcher and man. When he opens his record keening, crying that he is "off to save the world," he may be honest and he might be clowning himself. It could just be the bravado of wishful drinkin', but it sho'nuff ain't purty aesthetic insincerity. I am bone-weary of Pan's sons capering in the glades, and the ever-cloning manchildren of indie-ana. Give me Brother Pearson's testimony and its rare, precious ability to trigger the full spectrum of human feeling.

The inevitable forthcoming hootedoodle that results from Pearson's appearance at Austin's annual South by Southwest festival next week will determine how much of his vault comes to light and whether or not the amorphous-but-fervent digital cult that enshrined Lift to Experience and has awaited any new music with baited breath expands to a mass. However, I neither require consensus nor further laurels determining its future reception to claim that *Last of the Country Gentlemen* is a masterpiece. Especially when it seems possible that Brother Pearson could well disappear into Texas, never to record again. Or feel beckoned anew by the boomtown Berlin of our master satirist Californian bard Stew, and Pearson's fellow quester, the noted East Village African performance artist Krylon Superstar (a "breathaholic," as we all should be). He could pull a Josephine-with-her-leopards rather than remain here to help rebuild America(na) from the ashes.

I, the Indian watching from the deep dark woods as the settlers clash and struggle to resurrect themselves and their ideals from the heaven/hell

of Bush's infinitely twisted New Jerusalem, am very grateful that Josh T. Pearson has boldly called himself out an American dreamer. He reminds me that I could be one, too, if I am brave enough to bleed. This is worth so much more than letter grades and lazy crit comparisons to this act or that, so expect none. Due to similar inner vision and commitment, Pearson conjures the two other maverick artists who framed the past decade for me: my most-beloved white chocolate master, Lewis Taylor, from the United Kingdom, and still-undersung, Carolina-to-canyon folk visionary Jonathan Wilson. But he is virtually without peer. It takes a great deal now to summon me from the abyss. Truth alone.

Myself, still too blue to fly — yet there is great remedy and mystery to be gained from Josh the Revelator's Wild West revolution of the mind. I know you have heard the sounds of red, white, and blue footsteps scrawling in fear. You know intimately the disintegration of this earth. If only you have the ears to hear both the low lonesome and glory of "Sweetheart I Ain't Your Christ," wherein Pearson wrenches out, through rippling guitar, "You don't need a lover or a friend/ You need a savior/ And I am not him." Don't flinch when he sings from a land you're stranger to. Do not escape into the sunset — the brother needs you to openly and humbly step up as his amen corner, and welcome holy breath. **SFBG**

Josh T. Pearson will be making his solo debut at South by Southwest at three official performances — the first, Wed., March 16 at the Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Austin, should be the hot ticket.



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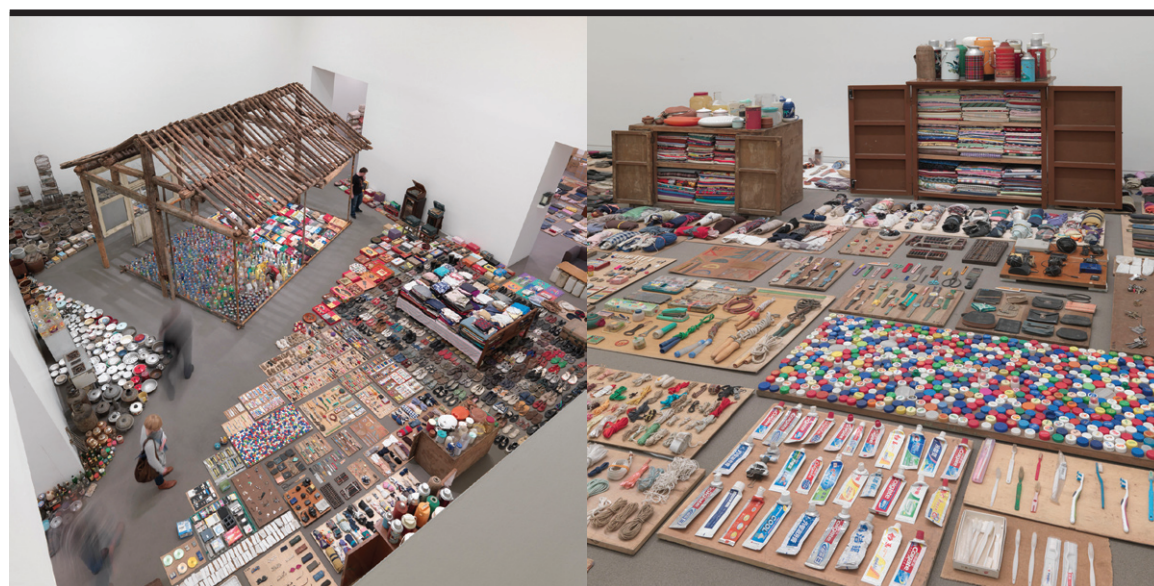
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Two views of *Waste Not* as it appeared in installation form at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

PHOTO BY TREVOR MILLS, VANCOUVER ART GALLERY-2010



Touching from a distance

By Matt Sussman
arts@sfbg.com

HAIRY EYEBALL “Art enables us to meet my parents again after they have departed,” the contemporary Chinese artist Song Dong says in a statement that introduces his current show at Yerba Buena Center of the Arts. “In my art, they have never been away, and will live with us forever. I think they might still be worrying about our children and us. I wanted to have an exhibition where we would bring them back to us and tell them, ‘Dad and Mom, don’t worry about us, we are all well.’”

Taking its title from that final reassurance of filial piety, this deeply personal and truly monumental exhibit is a testimony to Song’s sincere belief in the power of art as a means to connect. And you will likely leave a believer too. Art, as Song elaborates in the two decades of work collected here along with accompanying explanatory texts commissioned for the exhibit, allowed him to rebuild his once-strained relationship with his parents while they were still alive. It also allowed him to create a record of their lives together as a family who weathered the worst years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), and to help himself and his young daughter connect to the stories and the struggles of his par-

ents’ generation.

Making daily life the stuff of creative practice has its art historical precedents in conceptual art, a label that has often been attached to Song’s output. But such contextualization is largely beside the point in the face of the electric current of emotions — sadness, longing, remorse, gratitude — that it’s hard not to feel while watching the earlier video pieces Song made with and about his father, or surveying the massive installation piece, titled *Waste Not*, that he collaborated on with his mother.

The video works, the first pieces viewers encounter, offer variations on a simple yet effective technique: Song films himself or someone else sitting in front of a projection of an earlier recorded interview (usually with his father), continually having the person align their face with the face of whoever is speaking in the projected video. Sometimes it is Song aligning himself with his father; sometimes with his father and mother. And in one piece, a viewer can put himself in a Song family portrait via a similar process (the resulting snapshots are uploaded to YBCA’s Flickr account). The effect is ghostly, blurring the projected subject and the filmed subject into a new, purely virtual being.

The sprawling *Waste Not* is undoubtedly the heart of “Dad and Mom,” which displays the entire contents of the house Song’s mother lived in for 60 years, and where she

married and raised Song and his younger sister. Here, organized into neat piles that fill up YBCA’s entire large gallery, are the contents of a life: clothes, kitchen utensils, toiletries, school supplies, shopping bags, toys, shoes, furniture. At the center of the space hang the remains of the house’s walls and room, a skeleton of beams that seems an impossible vessel given the sheer volume of its former contents.

Having grown up amid the lean years of the Great Leap Forward, Song’s mother subscribed to the belief that nothing should go to waste (from which the installation takes its title), so she recycled and saved everything she could, from plastic bottles and fabric scraps to gasoline canisters and balls of string. Song, in turn, saw creating the installation with her as a way to continue this practice. By turning her accumulated junk into a traveling archive, nothing would have to be discarded and everything would be meaningfully preserved.

Originally conceived by Song in 2005 as a way to help his mother cope with the grief over her husband’s sudden death three years earlier, the work has now become a memorial to her memory as well. **SFBG**

SONG DONG: DAD AND MOM, DON’T WORRY ABOUT US, WE ARE ALL WELL

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Cult fiction

Introducing Taylor Stevens, your favorite new thriller author — whose own story has some twists

By Tim Redmond
arts@sfbg.com

LIT I read a lot of thrillers.



Mysteries, murder, international intrigue, weird pulp crime ... I've been addicted since I was in high

school and discovered John D. McDonald, Alistair McLean, and Trevanian. These days, I live by James Patterson, Michael Connolly, Robert B. Parker, Janet Evanovich, Lee Child, and John Lescroart.

And I just found the best new thriller writer, and the best new character, to come along since Mr. Child invented Jack Reacher. The writer's name is Taylor Stevens, her character is Vanessa Michael Munroe, and the first book of what I hope will be a continuing series is called *The Informationist* (Crown, 307 pages, \$23).

Buy it. It's awesome. And when Stevens is as big as Patterson, you can say you helped discover her.

V. M. Munroe is an awesome protagonist. She ran away from her missionary parents as a teen to sign on with one of Africa's most notorious gunrunners, and now she deals in information — secrets somebody wants but almost nobody can find.

The book's set in Central Africa, where Munroe has been hired to find the kidnapped daughter of a Texas oil billionaire.

By the way: she's skinny, slight, and a total fucking badass who rides a Ducati and effortlessly beats the shit out of the poor losers who try to accost her at a gas station. She speaks 22 languages. She's the first tranny thriller lead, too, a person who slips effortlessly from female to male. Of course, she's got personal demons, and part of the back story is her battle to silence them. By the end of the second chapter, I had written this in my notes: "I love Vanessa already. Nobody else like her on the literary scene. Nobody."

The plot is tight, the characters come alive, the sex is fun and sometimes intense but not overdone. The

scene at the end involving a sniper, a knife fight, and a stunning decapitation (tell you more and I'll ruin a gut-wrenching chapter) as good as anything I've read in years.

Unlike a lot of thriller authors, Stevens can write. Check it out:

The details of the case ran through her head, and with them came the memories. It was another life, another world, untamed and vast, where stretches of two-lane tarmac ran vein-like through sub-Saharan emptiness, and buses — old, rusting, belching black smoke — pumped the blood of humanity along the way.

And this from a woman who has a sixth-grade education.

Seriously. One of the most amazing things about Stevens is that she grew up in a cult in Central Africa, wasn't allowed to go beyond basic education, and wasn't allowed to read books.

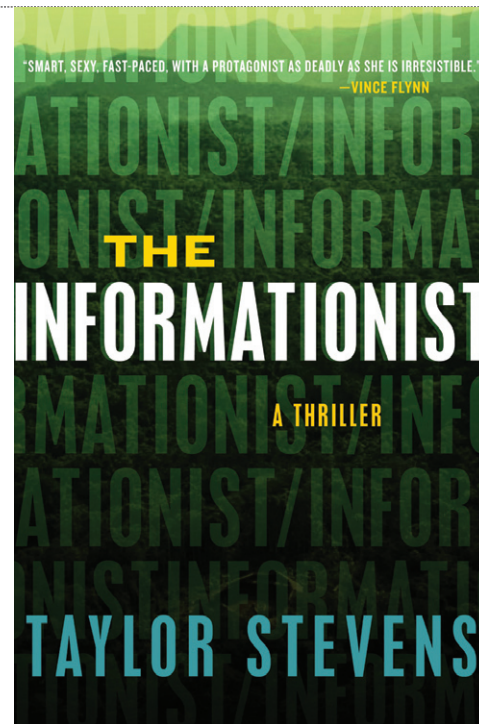
I caught up with her in February; here are some excerpts from our talk.

SFBG Tell me a little about your background and how you came to write this book.

Taylor Stevens I was born into and raised in the Children of God, an apocalyptic religious cult. That's the only world I knew. It was very secluded, all our interactions with what went on outside the community were accompanied by an adult cult member. We didn't have access to TV; books were almost nonexistent; we didn't listen to the radio. My entire world was framed within the context of the cult.

SFBG When did you get out?

TS I didn't get out until I was in my late 20s. I was quite afraid to leave, not of what the cult would do to me, but of what God would do to me. My ex husband — then my husband — and I took a long time to plan how to get out because we didn't want to end up like some other cult members who had left with no education, no money, no career, on the streets. We had a baby at the time. The group didn't believe in education. The standard acceptance was sixth-grade education.



The best new thriller writer in America: Taylor Stevens breaks new ground with *The Informationist*.

SFBG So where did you learn to write?

TS It's a big mystery, huh? Like my main character, I guess, I absorb languages — at least I absorbed English. I had to teach myself.

The ultimate inspiration came from reading Robert Ludlum, one of the first authors I read, and it was quite by accident. After we made it to the United States, we were so broke, we were living — a family of four — on \$13 an hour. I would buy books at garage sales because it was so cheap, then I would sell them again and use the money to buy more books. The first book I read was *The Holcroft Covenant*. It was so much beyond anything I'd seen before in reading, so I started reading Ludlum voraciously. I found *The Bourne Identity* and started reading it, and when I was reading *The Bourne Ultimatum* I was amazed by these places and people. I said to myself, "I wish I could write about all these exotic settings." And then I thought, "Wait a minute, I've lived in places far more exotic than this."

I've always wanted to write, but the cult would never let me write. I got in horrible trouble growing up and trying to write.

SFBG So did you just sit down and start working on *The Informationist*?

TS That was the first thing I wrote. I had dabbled when I was 15, but I had all my stuff taken and burned. I figured that if I'm going to write, I'd better learn something about writing. So I bought a couple

of used books on writing fiction and I learned from those.

SFBG In this genre of thriller fiction, there aren't a lot of female protagonists. Was that something you were thinking about?

TS No, because I had no idea. I didn't know what was out there at all. Even to this day, I'm not very widely read. I've read maybe 250 books. I just wrote what made sense to me.

SFBG One of the interesting things about Vanessa is that she has something of a trans element to her. Sometimes she's Vanessa and sometimes she's Michael. How did you come up with that?

TS When I first started writing this book, it didn't have any plot. I just wanted to use Africa as my setting. Jason Bourne was my ideal because I wanted a character who was tormented — not the ideal good guy or good girl, because life doesn't work like that. Right while I was reading the Ludlum books, I saw the *Tomb Raider* movies, back to back, and what I loved about Lara Croft was that, while she was a bit of a caricature, she was very sexual, very feminine on every level. I didn't want my character to lose her femininity in her badassery.

As far as playing the role of a male, in my experience in having lived in some of these countries, it's completely implausible that you would have a woman be able to go in there and root around and get what she needed. It wouldn't happen. So the only way she could do it is if she could pull herself off as

a man.

SFBG I'm not going to give away too much of the plot, but the subplot of her coming from of a background where she was living at 14 with a gunrunner, there is a certain parallel with you.

TS Her life and my life are not at all similar. But to understand her pain and the frustrations she went through — there's no way to create that without living with it. I did draw on the sense of emotions my friends and I grew up with. We didn't have a happy childhood, so it wasn't difficult to conjure that emotional torment, because it's very real.

SFBG They're going to make a movie out of this book, and I'm thinking if they stay true to the scene at the end with the decapitation, you're going to have a hard time getting even an R rating. I read a lot of thrillers, and I've rarely seen such a graphically brutal thing. It's brilliant, and it's gut-wrenching. Where did that come from?

TS It just made sense. This person already straddles a fine line between brilliance and insanity. And for her to lose the only one person who loves her for what she was, in such an arbitrary manner, there was no other way she could respond.

SFBG I hope there's a sequel.

TS It's already written. And I use my background in a more direct way — and there's a third book I'm working on now. And if I'm given an opportunity, I hope there will be much more of Michael Munroe. **SFBG**

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By Rita Felciano
arts@sfbg.com

DANCE Forty is the time when the midlife crisis is supposed to hit, but there's no sign that ODC is even close. At its short but sweet gala performance on March 11, which opened this year's three-week "Dance That Matters" program, the artists looked stunning, the choreography fresh and fun, and the audience thoroughly pleased. What more would you want? A home that is paid for? ODC has it. Some money in the bank? ODC has enough to stay alive. Plans for the future? Yes: more dance, and something called the ODC Campus that might include housing for dancers and perhaps even college degrees.

The gala featured new works by Brenda Way and Kimi Okada. (KT Nelson's *Listening Last*, a collaboration with Shinichi Iova-Koga, premieres this week.) For the celebratory yet pensive *Speaking Volumes: Architecture of Light II*, Way reworked the installation piece that ODC's company reopened its theater with last year. *Speaking* is linear and therefore allows for a different trajectory. Way takes stock of a dancer's life, from the working individual to the end of a career that gets absorbed into a mass of humanity. Thirty-five current, former, and recreational dancers flooded the stage for a communal celebration of dance. Along the way, they regaled us with aphorisms along the lines of "Art gives shape to life," and "Don't be afraid of people seeing your ideas." Their energetic optimism is characteristic of Way.

Speaking opened with Jeremy Smith following a voice-over instruction for a new piece. (For example: "Make a triangle with your arm ... stick your head through it.") His responses, sometimes literal, other times imagistic, were fascinating. Then flashlights began to search, a little too long, for potent ideas among dancers half-hidden in the dark.

The lights found, among other treasures, a quintet that reminded me of frolicking dogs and a flu-idly stretched give-and-take trio for Dennis Adams, Quilet Rarang, and

Vanessa Thiessen that allowed sparks to fly between friendly moments of repose. Fierceness and volatility without rancor propelled Elizabeth Farotte Heenan and Daniel Santos's duet. At the end of *Speaking*, they embraced. (Farotte Heenan is retiring.)

Zivolich, hair flying, skipped through the chaos. The English language can yield rich images, and Okada's choreography also presents more than a few. Two men literally bite the bullet; Yayoi Kambara points a Medusa finger and everyone freezes. Jerky, fragmented movement illustrates the topsy-turvy results of linguistic maneuvering to oft-comic effect.

But there is more to the piece, namely its navigation of culture gaps. In a smartly-timed encounter, two couples try to greet each other. One bows, the other outstretches hands.



Yayoi Kambara and Anne Zivolich in Kimi Okada's world-premiere take on cross-cultural communication, *I look vacantly at the Pacific ... though regret*. | PHOTO BY RJ MUNA

Associate choreographer Okada runs ODC's school and its mentorship program, so she choreographs little these days. That's why *I look vacantly at the Pacific ... though regret* — a humorous look at misunderstandings, erroneous assumptions, and long-held behavioral patterns — was so welcome. Good intentions won't keep you from making faux pas in a world that values "diversity." Yet Okada's take is so witty and good-natured that it would take a real curmudgeon of political correctness to take offense at this light-hearted consideration of a serious subject.

Look moves speedily through awkward encounters; it presents a world that's a merry-go-round from which there is no escape. Anne

Each attempt to connect only drives them further apart. During one of *Look*'s funniest moments, Jay Cloldt introduces a section of Japanese classical music. The dancers freeze in terror and embarrassment. Rubbery-limbed Santos, clad in a business suit, tries to toe the line — here we go with an image — but falls all over himself. He had my sympathy. **SFBG**

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Looking glass love

Abbas Kiarostami returns with a surreal take on Tuscan romance

By Max Goldberg
 arts@sfbg.com

FILM Abbas Kiarostami's beguiling new feature signals "relationship movie" with every cobblestone step, but it's manifestly a film of ideas — one in which disillusionment is as much a formal concern as a dramatic one. Typical of Kiarostami's dialogic narratives, *Certified Copy* is both the name of the film and an entity within the film: a book written against the ideal of originality in art by James Miller (William Shimell), an English pedant fond of dissembling. After a lecture in Tuscany, he meets an apparent admirer (Juliette Binoche) in her antique shop. She remains nameless (and is referred to in the credits as "She") even as she steers them toward their day in the country, though he doesn't seem to notice.

Their dialogues really begin in the car (a prominent setting in many of Kiarostami's films). We watch them talk for several minutes in an unbroken two-shot, amiably distracted by the windshield's scrolling reflection of the street. They gauge each other's values using her sister as a test case — a woman who, according to the Binoche character, is the living embodiment of James' book. Do their relative opinions of this off-screen cipher constitute characterization? Or are they themselves ciphers of the film's recursive structure? Kiarostami makes us wonder.

They begin to act as if they were married midway through the film, though the switch is not so out of the blue: Kiarostami's narrative has already turned a few figure-eights, and the role-playing initially comes of a café matron's unremarkable misunderstanding. What's strange — and pointedly wearying — is how little this shift alters their quarrelsome dynamic. Experience bears this much out: in intimate conversation, hypothetical premises are no safeguard from genuine emotions; to the contrary,

we often invent them precisely to uncap recrimination. If *Certified Copy*'s game resembles an acting exercise, that makes sense too given that actors like Binoche are garlanded for channeling authentic-seeming emotions in contrived scenarios. The mismatched casting of Shimell (an opera singer, blocky as an actor) and Binoche (overreaching) underlines this reflective aspect of the film, as does Kiarostami's deliberate compositional strategies (marked especially by recessionary staging and doublings within the frame).

confidence he thinks that all She really needs is a tender gesture — succinctly expressing our own desires as an audience). Later, She looks out the window of an empty trattoria on an idyllic wedding scene. Kiarostami cuts back to her brightened face, giving a little object lesson in romantic projection. (Earlier the café matron warns her, "It'd be stupid of us to ruin our lives for an ideal.")

Taking Kiarostami's bait, several critics have already deemed *Certified Copy* derivative of many other elliptical romances. The strongest case for an "original" comes of Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* (1954). Rossellini also makes use of his leads' contrasting nationalities and acting styles; the car enclosure is similarly emphasized in both films; and Kiarostami cleverly plays on Ingrid



She and him: Juliette Binoche stars as "She" in Abbas Kiarostami's stylized relationship drama, *Certified Copy*.

PHOTO BY LAURENT THURIN NAL

We're not exempt from the character's misconceptions, starting with the fact that Kiarostami plainly wants us to mistake *Certified Copy* for another kind of movie. Tellingly, two rare POV shots in the film turn on misperception and illusion. In the first, James watches a couple in a piazza. The husband appears to be shouting at his wife, but when he turns the cell phone is revealed. (After a brief introduction, the stranger, played by Buñuel regular Jean-Claude Carrière, tells James in

Bergman's emotionally resonant walks through museums and ruins throughout *Certified Copy*. Of course *Voyage to Italy*'s premise is reversed — a married couple acts as if strangers — but the real difference is that while Rossellini's masterpiece realizes first-person feelings in a third-person approach, Kiarostami stays in the shadow of doubt to the end. **SFBG**

CERTIFIED COPY opens Fri/18 in Bay Area theaters.

Dolphin double

Mi Ami shifts to aquatic two-piece dynamics on its new EP

By Michelle Broder Van Dyke
arts@sfbg.com

MUSIC San Francisco's Mi Ami was a trio when it released the spazz-punk albums *Steal Watersports* (2009) and *Steal Your Face* (2010) on

Thrill Jockey. Then bassist Jacob Long announced that he was going to leave the group. After Long made that decision, Mi Ami played a few Bay Area shows at El Rio, Rickshaw Stop, and the Knockout. They were full-throttle performances — high in energy, as always. But they also revealed a ripping-at-the-seams that would soon be complete.

Mi Ami's Daniel Martin-McCormick explains that he and remaining bandmate Damon Palermo believed that "the music we'd written as trio was specific to that dynamic." Rather than recruit a new bassist, the remaining two Mi Ami members spent the past year experimenting with different arrangements to make the band work as a duo. "We tried different combinations with guitar and drum," says Martin-McCormick. "Then we tried with me playing keyboards and Damon playing drums." What they settled on — "Damon playing a drum machine and a sampler, and me doing stuff on top of it" — is even more surprising.

Dolphins, a 12-inch EP released on Thrill Jockey, is a first taste of the band's new approach, which includes a vintage 707 drum machine, a sampler, keys, and of course Martin-McCormick's trademark squall-vocals. In its new manifestation, Mi Ami ditches any resemblance to a traditional rock band. At the same time, the ideas behind the music are similar to those the band has always been traveling along. The influences are the same; then again, they've always been eclectic: post-punk to Italo-disco, dubstep to krautrock. The emphasis remains on being (and feeling) very live.

Mi Ami is bicoastal now that Martin-McCormick has relo-

cated to New York City. But before the big move, the pair recorded *Dolphins* with Phil Manley. "We were puzzling over how to do the recording because the way we do it live is pretty bootleg," Martin-McCormick says. "It's pretty raw." Manley suggested that Mi Ami just record the album live. So they did.



No relation to Flo Rida: Mi Ami reps both coasts in its new format as a duo. | PHOTO BY KAT MATUTINA

There are, of course, a few touch-ups. Even so, *Dolphins* is essentially a live performance, and one that encapsulates the quintessential give-and-take of the band's music. "There's a lot of interplay, and a lot of focus on creating, and jamming that out, and building on top of it," Martin-McCormick said.

Mi Ami layers sounds, as on "Sunrise." As the song emerges, there are undulating synth sounds and kraut beats. Next, steady keys slowly become awash with samples and the song transitions into jungle dub. Once the mood and atmosphere has evolved into a very different space, the track returns to the steady keys. Each song is given time to grow, build — even overflow — then fade away. And no two songs abide by the same rules. Each creates a unique evolution.

The EP's opener, "Hard Up," is chock-full of hypnotic beats and heavy bass, making it a per-

fect party starter. Its follow-up, "Dolphins," begins where "Hard Up" leaves off — with dance-ready beats. As it unravels, however, it reveals something altogether different: ecstatic sounds turn into twisted grooves and anguished beats as Martin-McCormick's apocalyptic cries create a juxtaposition of dolphins washing ashore while "Your wife in capris/ Drinking Hi-C and eating lima beans." Through the sampler and keyboard, Martin-McCormick creates dying dolphin sounds, pushing his voice to an even higher register to sound dolphin-like. The track is a response,

he explains, to "humanity's assault on the environment."

A final, poignant reinvention of the band is revealed on *Dolphins'* final song "Echo," which has appeared in different forms and with slightly different titles (such as "Echonoecho") on two earlier releases. The sole through-line is Martin-McCormick's vocal track. "We didn't want to use Jacob Long's bassline, but the vocal part could go over anything — it's so repetitive," he said.

Dolphins is proof that, although challenging, change isn't always bad. In conjunction with the EP's release, Palermo is traveling to New York to tour with Martin-McCormick as a duo for the first time. They'll play a handful of shows in New York, moving on to the Midwest, and then to Europe. If we're lucky, this journey will eventually include a return to the Bay Area. **SFBG**

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Dutch breakcore musician Bong-Ra plays the Elbo Room Tues/22.

Music listings are compiled by Cheryl Eddy. Since club life is unpredictable, it's a good idea to call ahead to confirm bookings and hours. Prices are listed when provided to us. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks.

WEDNESDAY 16

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Boulder Acoustic Society, Victoria Vox, Naomi Greenwald Hotel Utah. 8pm, \$10.
Caroliner Rainbow Shade is Natural Composure, Gumball Rimpoche, Tony Dryer, Coagulator, PantyKhrist Café Du Nord. 8:30pm, \$10.
Trevor Childs and the Beholders, Headslide, Bobbleheads El Rio. 8pm, \$5.
Clean White Lines Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, \$10.
Crosstops, Undead Boys, Ruleta Rusa, Face the Rail, Street Justice Elbo Room. 8pm, \$8.
Vows, Gipsy Moonlight Band, Stirling Says, DJ Mr. Soft Bottom of the Hill. 9pm, \$8.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Dink Dink Dink, Gaucho, Michael Abraham Amnesia. 7pm, free.
Ben Marcato and the Mondo Combo Top of the Mark. 7:30pm, \$10.
Pamela Rose's Wild Women of Song Yoshi's San Francisco. 8pm, \$18.
Michael Parsons Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8:30pm, free.
Paul Drescher Ensemble 25th Anniversary Z Space, 450 Florida, SF; www.brownpapertickets.org. 7pm, \$20.
Marc Ribot Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission, SF; www.sfjazz.org. 7:30pm, \$20-35. Accompanying a screening of *The Kid* (1921).

DANCE CLUBS

Booty Call Q-Bar, 456 Castro, SF; www.bootycallwednesdays.com. 9pm. Juanita Moore hosts this dance party, featuring DJ Robot Hustle.
Bueno Onda Little Baobab, 3388 19th St., SF; (415) 643-3558. 10pm, \$2. Soul, funk, swing, and rare grooves with residents Dr. Musco, DJB, and guest Gaselection.
Cannonball Beauty Bar. 10pm, free. Rock, indie, and nu-disco with DJ White Mike.
Jam Fresh Wednesdays Vessel, 85 Campton, SF; (415) 433-8585. 9:30pm, free. With DJs Slick D, Chris Clouse, Rich Era, Don Lynch, and more spinning top40, mashups, hip hop, and remixes.
Mary-Go-Round Lookout, 3600 16th St, SF; (415) 431-0306. 10pm, \$5. A weekly drag show with hosts Cookie Dough, Pollo Del Mar, and Suppositori Spelling.
No Room For Squares Som., 2925 16th St, SF; (415) 558-8521. 6-10pm, free. DJ Afrodite Shake spins jazz for happy hour.
Respect Wednesdays End Up. 10pm, \$5. Rotating DJs Daddy Rolo, Young Fyah, Irie Dole, I-Vier, Sake One, Serg, and more spinning reggae, dancehall, roots, lovers rock, and mash ups.
Synchronize Il Pirata, 2007 16th St, SF; (415) 626-2626. 10pm, free. Psychedelic dance music with DJs Helios, Gatto Matto, Psy Lotus, Intergalactoid, and guests.

THURSDAY 17

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Dwele Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, \$28.
Ex, Death Sentence: Panda!, Street Eaters Bottom of the Hill. 9pm, \$15.
La Gente, Ziva, Anita Lofton Project, Cassandra Farrar and the Left Brains Café Du Nord. 9pm, \$10.
Horns of Happiness, Bad Paradise Hotel Utah. 9pm, \$7.
Laurie Morvan Band Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$15.
Elliot Randall and the Deadmen, Walty, Brad

Brooks Red Devil Lounge. 8pm, \$8.
Sporting Life, Somehow at Sea, White Cloud Knockout. 10pm, \$6.
Tenderloins, DJs Omar and Party Ben Rickshaw Stop. 10pm, \$10.
Tunnel, Buffalo Tooth, Poor Sons, That Ghost Thee Parkside. 9pm, \$5.
Wounded Stag, Scission Stud. 9pm.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Royal Hartigan, Hafez Modirzadeh Red Poppy Art House. 7pm, \$10-15.
Marcus Roberts Trio Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission, SF; www.ybca.org. 7:30pm, \$30-50.
"Razz Room Third Anniversary Gala Celebration" Rrazz Room. 8pm. With Sarah Dash, Joyce DeWitt, Sally Kellerman, and more; benefit for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.
Stompy Jones Top of the Mark. 7:30pm, \$10.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Culann's Hounds, Brothers Comatose, Fucking Buckaroos Great American Music Hall. 8pm, \$20.
Saddie Cats Atlas Café. 8-10pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Afrolicious Elbo Room. 9:30pm, \$5. DJs Pleasuremaker and Señor Oz spin Afrobeat, tropicália, electro, samba, and funk.
Caribbean Connection Little Baobab, 3388 19th St, SF; (415) 643-3558. 10pm, \$3. DJ Stevie B and guests spin reggae, soca, zouk, reggaeton, and more.
Club Jammies Edinburgh Castle. 10pm, free. DJs EBERrad and White Mice spinning reggae, punk, dub, and post punk.
Delhi 2 Dublin, DJ Dragonfly, Pleasuremaker, Dgiin Mezzanine. 9pm.
Drop the Pressure Underground SF. 6-10pm, free. Electro, house, and datafunk highlight this weekly happy hour.
80s Night Cat Club. 9pm, \$6 (free before 9:30pm). Two dance floors bumpin' with the best of 80s mainstream and underground with Dangerous Dan, Skip, Low Life, and guests. This week: "Madonna Music Video Spectacular."
Guilty Pleasures Gestalt, 3159 16th St, SF; (415) 560-0137. 9:30pm, free. DJ TophZilla, Rob Metal, DJ Stef, and Disco-D spin punk, metal, electro-funk, and 80s.
Hot Mess: St. Paddy's Day Bash Ambassador Lounge, 673 Geary, SF; www.ambassador415.com. 10pm, free. Indie, booty, and electro with DJs White Mike, Greg J, and Audio 1.
Jivin' Dirty Disco Butter, 354 11th St., SF; (415) 863-5964. 8pm, free. With DJs spinning disco, funk, and classics.
Mestiza Bollywood Café, 3376 19th St, SF; (415) 970-0362. 10pm, free. Showcasing progressive Latin and global beats with DJ Juan Data.
Nightvision Harlot, 46 Minna, SF; (415) 777-1077. 9:30pm, \$10. DJs Danny Daze, Franky Boissy, and more spinning house, electro, hip hop, funk, and more.
1984 Mighty. 9pm, \$2. The long-running New Wave and 80s party has a new venue, featuring video DJs Mark Andrus, Don Lynch, and celebrity guests.
Peaches Skylark, 10pm, free. With an all female DJ line up featuring Deeandroid, Lady Fingaz, That Girl, and Umami spinning hip hop.
St. Patrick's Day Electro Party Supperclub, 657 Harrison, SF; www.blast-sf.com. 10pm, \$10. With Digital Freq, B333Son, Liam Shy, Dizzy, and more.
Thursday Special Tralala Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 5pm, free. Downtempo, hip-hop, and freestyle beats by Dr. Musco and Unbroken Circle MCs.

FRIDAY 18

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Devo, Octopus Project Warfield. 9pm, \$37.50-99.50.
Dwele Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, \$30.
East of Western, Dogcatcher, Velvet Diplomacy Café Du Nord. 9pm, \$15.
Finches, Coconut, Mist and Mast Hemlock Tavern. 9:30pm, \$8.
Funk Revival Orchestra, Yung Mars Project, 40 Watt Hype Elbo Room. 10pm, \$13.
Katdelic, DJ K-Os Boom Boom Room. 9:30pm, \$15.
New Mastersounds Independent. 9pm, \$22.
Cece Peniston Rrazz Room. 9:15pm, \$35.
Punch Brothers, Chris Thile, Sweetback Sisters Great American Music Hall. 9pm, \$26.
Soul of John Black Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$15.
State Radio, Ton Tons Fillmore. 9pm, \$21.
Marnie Stern, Tera Melos, Amaranth Bottom of the Hill. 10pm, \$12.
Vegas is North, Dylan Fox and the Wave, Sunshine Estates, Taking's Not Stealing Slim's. 8pm, \$13.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 36 >>

MARCH 24 - 27
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04.08	Matthew Dear
04.09	New Wave City
04.13	Breakage
04.15	CSS + Hot Tub
04.16	Trentemøller
04.20	The Go! Team
04.24	Left Fest
04.30	Bootie Prom
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05.07	Dirty Vegas
05.16	A-Trak + Kid Sister + Gaslamp Killer

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WED 3/16 7:30PM \$8
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ELBO ROOM PRESENTS
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COUNTDOWN TO ARMAGEDDON (SEATTLE)
FIX MY HEAD

LATER: 10PM \$10
SPINNING '60S SOUL 45'S
SATURDAY NIGHT SOUL PARTY WITH DJS
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AOS MAC, BLAKE NELSON,
MARI NOMI, MICHELLE TEA

TUE 3/22 9PM \$10/12
CRACKWHORE PRESENTS
BONG-RA (THE NETHERLANDS),
END.USER (BELGIUM),
BONK, VJ SLACKNESS

WED 3/23 9PM \$5
ELBO ROOM PRESENTS
CLUB SHUTTER
WITH DJS
NAKO, OMAR, JUSTIN

UPCOMING
THU 3/24 AFROLICIOUS
FRI 3/25 ALBINO!
SAT 3/26 40NEFUNKTION: DJ NU-MARK
SUN 3/27 DUB MISSION: DJ SEP, DJG

ADVANCE TICKETS
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FRI/18
CONT>>

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Black Market Jazz Orchestra Top of the Mark. 9pm, \$10.
Emily Anne's Delights Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 9pm, free.
"Go Home: Ben Goldberg, Ellery Eskelin, Charlie Hunter, Scott Amendola" Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission, SF; www.sfjazz.org. 8pm, \$20-35.
Amanda McBroom Razz Room. 7:30pm, \$35.
Paul Drescher Ensemble 25th Anniversary Z Space, 450 Florida, SF; www.brownpapertickets.org. 8pm, \$20.
JL Stiles Red Poppy Art House. 8pm, \$8-12.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

"Bluegrass Bonanza!" Plough and Stars. 9pm, \$6-10. With Bluegrass Revolution and Trespassers.

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MUSIC LISTINGS

Brass Menazeri, Michael Musika, Toshio Hirano, DJ Zeljko Rickshaw Stop. 8pm, \$12.
Colm O'Riain St. Cyprian's Church, 2097 Turk, SF; www.noevalleymusicseries.com. 8pm.

DANCE CLUBS

Afro Bao Little Baobab, 3388 19th St, SF; (415) 643-3558. 10pm, \$5. Afro and world music with rotating DJs including Stepwise, Steve, Claude, Santero, and Elembe.
Dirty Rotten Dance Party Madrone Art Bar. 9pm, \$5. With DJs Morale, Kap10 Harris, and Shane King spinning electro, bootybass, crunk, swampy breaks, hyphy, rap, and party classics.
Exhale, Fridays Project One Gallery, 251 Rhode Island, SF; (415) 465-2129. 5pm, \$5. Happy hour with art, fine food, and music with Vin Sol, King Most, DJ Centipede, and Shane King.
Fubar Fridays Butter, 354 11th St., SF; (415) 863-5964. 6pm, \$5. With DJs spinning retro mashup remixes.
Good Life Fridays Apartment 24, 440 Broadway, SF; (415) 989-3434. 10pm, \$10. With DJ Brian spinning hip hop, mashups, and top 40.
Hot Chocolate Milk 9pm, \$5. With DJs Big Fat Frog, Chardmo, DuseRock, and more spinning old and new school funk.
Oldies Night Knockout. 9pm, \$2-4. Doo-wop, one-hit wonders, soul, and more with DJs Primo, Daniel, and Lost Cat.
Radioactivity 222 Hyde, SF; (415) 440-0222. 6pm. Synth sounds of the cold war era.
Rockabilly Fridays Jay N Bee Club, 2736 20th St, SF; (415) 824-4190. 9pm, free. With DJs Rockin' Raul, Oakie Oran, Sergio Iglesias, and Tanoa "Samoa Boy" spinning 50s and 60s Doo Wop, Rockabilly, Bop, Jive, and more.
Salted vs. Green Gorilla Lounge Public Works, 161 Erie, SF; (415) 932-0955. 9pm, \$10-15. With Miguel Migs.
SF-RES Milk. 9pm, \$5. Live beats and electronics with Secret Sidewalk, Broken Figures, and Bento and Jermski, plus DJs MuddBird, DnZ, and Modest Mark.
Some Thing Stud. 10pm, \$7. VivvyAnne Forevermore, Glamamore, and DJ Down-E give you fierce drag shows and afterhours dancing.
Trannyshack: David Bowie Tribute DNA Lounge. 9:30pm, \$15. With special guest Angie Bowie.
Vintage Orson, 508 Fourth St, SF; (415) 777-1508. 5:30-11pm, free. DJ TophOne and guest spin jazzy beats for cocktalianis.
DJ What's His Fuck Riptide Tavern. 9pm, free. Old-school punk rock and other gems.

SATURDAY 19
ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Cartographer, Pegataur, Tigon Hemlock Tavern. 9:30pm, \$6.
Dwele Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, \$30.
Eric McFaddin Trio, Jeff Cotton's Gin Joint, Terese Taylor, Carroll Glenn Café Du Nord. 9pm, \$12.

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Foreverland Showroom, 1000 Van Ness, SF; www.theshowroomsf.com. 10pm, \$15.
Greg Ginn and the Royal We, Big Scenic Nowhere, Glitter Wizard Thee Parkside. 9pm, \$8.
Gino Matteo Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$20.
MegaFlame, Gomorran Social Aid and Pleasure Club Bottom of the Hill. 10pm, \$12. With a burlesque performance by Delilah.
Murderess, Countdown to Armageddon, Fix My Head Elbo Room. 5pm.
New Mastersounds Independent. 9pm, \$22.
Paris King Band, Jaymie Arrendondo Thee Parkside. 3pm, free.
Cece Peniston Razz Room. 9:15pm, \$35.
Slowness, Gosta Berling, Tied to Branches Odes Retox Lounge. 8pm, \$5.
Zion-I and the Grouch Fillmore. 9pm, \$25.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Patricia Barber Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission, SF; www.sfjazz.org. 8pm, \$30-50.
Dave Mihaly Hoonsut Society Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 9pm, free.
Amanda McBroom Razz Room. 7:30pm, \$35.
Paul Drescher Ensemble 25th Anniversary Z Space, 450 Florida, SF; www.brownpapertickets.org. 2 and 8pm, \$20.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Trio Garufa Red Poppy Art House. 8pm, \$15.
Craig Ventresco and Meredith Axelrod Atlas Café. 4pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Afro Bao Little Baobab, 3388 19th St, SF; (415) 643-3558. 10pm, \$5. Afro and world music with rotating DJs including Stepwise, Steve, Claude, Santero, and Elembe.
Bootie SF: Brides of March DNA Lounge. 9pm, \$8-15. Mash-ups.
Booty Bassment Knockout. 10pm, \$5. Hip-hop with DJs Ryan Poulsen and Dimitri Dickinson.
Cock Fight Underground SF. 9pm, \$7. Gay locker room antics galore with electro-spinning DJ Earworm, MyKill, and Dcnstrct.
Full House Gravity, 3505 Scott, SF; (415) 776-1928. 9pm, \$10. With DJs Roost Uno and Pony P spinning dirty hip hop.
Go Bang! Deco Lounge, 510 Larkin, SF; (415) 346-2025. 9pm, \$5. Recreating the diversity and freedom of the 70's/ 80's disco nightlife with DJs Steve Fabus, Tres Lingerie, Sergio, and more.
Hacienda Deco Lounge, 510 Larkin, SF; www.decof.com. 10pm. With Bobby Browser and resident DJs Jase of Bass, Tristes Tropiques, and Nihar.
Hot Flash Dance: Experience the Magic Ruby Skye. 5-9pm, \$15. For older women who like to dance, with DJ Rockaway.
HYP Club Eight, 1151 Folsom, SF; www.eightsf.com. 10pm, free. Gay and lesbian hip-hop party, featuring DJs spinning the newest in the top 40s hip hop and hyphy.
Non Stop Bhangra Rickshaw Stop. 9pm, \$10-20. Bhangra, hip-hop, reggae, and electronica.
Prince vs. Michael Madrone Art Bar. 8pm, \$5. With DJs Dave Paul and Jeff Harris battling it out on the turntables with album cuts, remixes, rare tracks, and classics.
Rock City Butter, 354 11th St., SF; (415) 863-5964. 6pm, \$5 after 10pm. With DJs spinning party rock.
Saturday Night Soul Party Elbo Room. 10pm, \$5-10. DJs Lucky, Phengren Oswald, and Paul Paul spin sixties soul.
Spirit Fingers Sessions 330 Ritch. 9pm, free. With DJ Morse Code and live guest performances.
True Skool Sessions Bruno's. 10pm, \$10. With DJ Jah Yzer, Ren the Vinyl Archaeologist, and DJ Franky Fresh spinning hip-hop classics, funk, and more.

SUNDAY 20
ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Acid King, Carlton Melton, Qumran Orphics Bottom of the Hill. 2pm, \$8.
"Battle of the Bands" DNA Lounge. 5:30pm, \$12.
Grand Lake, Devotionals Amnesia. 9pm.
Ian Fays, Hobbits NYC, Amber Field Rickshaw Stop. 6pm, \$15. Ipads for Autism benefit.
Lucas Nelson and Promise of the Real, Reflectacles Café Du Nord. 8pm, \$10.
Mist Giant, Withered Hand, Future Twin Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, \$6.
She's, Rotten Kids, Flaming Horizons Slim's. 4pm, \$10.
Zion-I and the Grouch Amnesia, 1855 Haight, SF; www.amoeba.com. 2pm, free.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Yasmin Levy Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness, SF; www.sfjazz.org. 7pm, \$25-65.
Amanda McBroom Razz Room. 7:30pm, \$35.
Montana Skies Red Poppy Art House. 7pm, \$10-15.

Paul Drescher Ensemble 25th Anniversary Z Space, 450 Florida, SF; www.brownpapertickets.org. 2pm, \$20.
Regina Carter's Reverse Thread Yoshi's San Francisco. 5pm, \$5-22.
Tom Lander Duo Medjool, 2522 Mission, SF; www.medjoolsf.com. 6-9pm, free.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Danilo y Universal El Rio. 4pm, \$8.
Family Folk Explosion Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8pm, free.
Grooming the Crow, Going Away Party Thee Parkside. 4pm, free.
Louise Pitre Rrazz Room. 5pm, \$30.

DANCE CLUBS

Call In Sick Skylark. 9pm, free. DJs Animal and I Will spin danceable hip-hop.
DiscoFunk Mashups Cat Club. 10pm, free. House and 70's music.
Dub Mission Elbo Room. 9pm, \$6. Dub, roots,

and classic dancehall with DJ Sep, Ludachris, and guest Mexican Dubwiser.
Fresh Ruby Skye. 6pm-midnight, \$20-25. With DJ Kimberly S.
Gloss Sundays Trigger, 2344 Market, SF; (415) 551-CLUB. 7pm. With DJ Hawthorne spinning house, funk, soul, retro, and disco.
Honey Soundsystem Paradise Lounge. 8pm-2am. "Dance floor for dancers – sound system for lovers." Got that?
La Pachanga Blue Macaw, 2565 Mission, SF; www.thebluemacawsf.com. 6pm, \$10. Salsa dance party with live Afro-Cuban salsa bands.
Swing-out Sundays Rock-It Room. 7pm, free (dance lessons \$15). DJ B-Bop spins 20s through 50s swing, jive, and more with varying live band weekly.

MONDAY 21

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Destroyer, War on Drugs, Devon Williams, DJ

Britt Govea Great American Music Hall. 8pm, \$16.
Fujiya and Miyagi, Fol Chen Independent. 8pm, \$15.
Jimmy Thackery Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, \$18.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Regina Carter's Reverse Thread Yoshi's San Francisco. 8pm, \$22.
Tom Shaw Trio, Shelley, Victoria Theodore, Sheelagh Murphy, Suzanna Smith, Benn Bacot Café Du Nord. 9pm, \$30. Benefit for Lyon Martin Health Services.

DANCE CLUBS

Death Guild DNA Lounge. 9:30pm, \$3-5. Gothic, industrial, and synthpop with Joe Radio, Decay, and Melting Girl.
Krazy Mondays Beauty Bar. 10pm, free. With DJs Ant-1, Sir-Tipp, Ruby Red I, Lo, and Gelo spinning hip hop.
M.O.M. Madrone Art Bar. 6pm, free. With DJ Gordo Cabeza and guests playing all Motown

every Monday.
Network Mondays Azul Lounge, One Tillman Pl, SF; www.inhouselatent.com. 9pm, \$5. Hip-hop, R&B, and spoken word open mic, plus featured performers.
Sausage Party Rosamunde Sausage Grill, 2832 Mission, SF; (415) 970-9015. 6:30-9:30pm, free. DJ Dandy Dixon spins vintage rock, R&B, global beats, funk, and disco at this happy hour sausage-shack gig.
Skylarking Skylark. 10pm, free. With resident DJs I & I Vibration, Beatnok, and Mr. Lucky and weekly guest DJs.

TUESDAY 22

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Beta State, Dylan Fox and the Wave, Nouveau-Expo Bottom of the Hill. 9pm, \$8.
Bong-Ra, End.User, Bonk, VJ Slackness Elbo Room. 9pm, \$12.

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DANCE CLUBS

Boomtown Little Baobab, 3388 19th St, SF; www.bissapbaobab.com. 9pm, free. DJ Mundi spins roots, ragga, dancehall, and more.
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ON THE CHEAP LISTINGS



Get your copy of *Pearls Blow Up* signed by the Stephen Pastis as he kicks off his world book tour March 19 at the Cartoon Art Museum. | IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CARTOON ART MUSEUM

On the Cheap listings are compiled by Jackie Andrews. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks.

WEDNESDAY 16

Castro farmers' market seasonal opening Noe between Market and Beaver, SF; 1-800-949-FARM, www.pcfma.com. 4-8pm, free. The Castro farmers' market is back in business today and every Wednesday hereafter until December 21 with bountiful local produce at bargain prices, live performances, and other events in the works. Today's market kick-off includes a Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence ribbon cutting ceremony and more St. Patrick's Day-themed activities to keep you entertained while you peruse the dinosaur kale and heirloom radishes.

THURSDAY 17

Tara Jane O'Neil El Rio, 3158 Mission, SF; (415) 282-3325, www.elriosf.com. 9pm, \$5. Remember when you were a kid and you thought paying five bucks for a show was a rip? Well now it's a bargain – especially for a PDX-Olympia-SF trifecta of awesomeness – so tonight, come see TJo and the Root Buds with Lesbians, and local queer psych rockers Night Call. Also slinging vinyl will be DJ Theo Kwo and DJ Permanent Wave.

Ladies of Letterpress exhibition San Francisco Center for the Book, 300 De Haro, SF; (415) 565-0545, www.sfcbook.org. 6-8pm, free. Tonight the SFBC is hosting a talk and a one night only exhibition of letterpress printing featuring works by local members of Ladies of Letterpress, with an "impromptu" letterpress business card mash-up exhibition planned (so bring those letterpress business cards you have lying around) and chocolates in the shape of La Forêt fonts for tasting – cute!

SATURDAY 19

An evening with Stephan Pastis Cartoon Art Museum, 655 Mission, SF; (415) CAR-TOON, www.cartoonart.org. 6-8pm, \$5, free for members. Enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at *Pearls Before Swine* with the creator of this award-winning comic strip, Stephen Pastis -- who is somewhat controversial for his relentless badgering of stale and boring comics (cough*Family Circle*cough) and use of certain subjects that tend to piss people off, like George Bush, Israel, religion -- you know, the usual. This bally lawyer-turned-cartoonist will be signing books after the presentation and celebration of his new collection, *Pearls Blow Up*.

SUNDAY 20

Sunday Streets kick-off Embarcadero between Fisherman's Wharf and Terry Francois Drive, SF; www.sundaystreetsf.com. 11am-4pm, free. Another year of Sunday Streets is upon us, marking the onset of beautiful San Francisco weather – knock on wood – with this free health and community oriented event. The first "Streets" of the season will begin at Fisherman's Wharf and follow the Embarcadero down to Mission Bay, ending at Terry Francois Drive. Bring your roller skates, unicycle, skateboard, or just a plain pair of walking shoes and enjoy the activities and vendors that line this route, closed off from automobile traffic for the day.
Sixth Annual Meat Out Unitarian Center, 11887 Franklin, SF; (415) 273-5481, uufetasf@gmail.com, www.sfvcs.org. Noon-2pm, \$8 suggested donation. Get on board with the Board of Supervisor-approved Veg Day Mondays resolution a day early at this meatless and cruelty free luncheon with guest speakers – including Bob Linden of Go Vegan Radio on Green 960 AM and clinician-turned-health book author, Dr. Michael Klaper. Free recipes will be available for you to take home and veg out any day of the week. Don't forget to register in advance by email or phone, as space is limited.

MONDAY 21

Pecha Kucha 330 Ritch, 330 Ritch, SF; www.pecha-kucha.org. 7pm, \$5 suggested donation. Pecha Kucha, now a popular event in cities around the world, began as a way for young designers in varying fields to show off their work and share ideas in a specific presentation format. A dozen or so designers present 20 images for 20 seconds per piece and have six minutes and 40 seconds to explain their work before the next presenter takes the stage. Today's presenters include Marilyn Yu, Davis Albertson, and Mila Zelkha, and as a special treat: local soul food eatery Little Skillet will be serving up their famous chicken and waffles.

TUESDAY 22

Water Matters book launch party Project One, 251 Rhode Island, SF; www.watarmatters.eventbrite.com. 6-9pm, free. Celebrate World Water Day with the release of the new book, *Water Matters: Why We Need to Act Now to Save Our Most Critical Resource*. There will be a panel discussion with leading environmental thinkers, like Wenonah Hauter of Food & Water Watch and Michael Brune of the Sierra Club, as well as a party to follow. **SFBG**



Memory play: Danielle O'Hare in Cutting Ball's *Lady Grey* (in ever lower light). | PHOTO BY DAVID ALLEN

Stage listings are compiled by Guardian staff. Performance times may change; call venues to confirm. Reviewers are Robert Avila, Rita Felciano, and Nicole Gluckstern. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks. For complete listings, see www.sfbg.com.

THEATER

OPENING

Geezer Marsh, 1062 Valencia; (800) 838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$20-50. Previews Thurs, 8pm; Sat, 5pm; Sun, 3pm (through March 27). Opens March 31. Thurs, 8pm; Sat, 5pm; Sun, 3pm. Through May 1. The Marsh presents a new solo show about aging and mortality by Geoff Hoyle.

M. Butterfly Gough Street Playhouse, 1620 Gough; (510) 207-5774, www.custommade.org. \$20-28. Thurs-Sat, 8pm (also April 3 and 10, 7pm). Custom Made Theatre presents David Henry Hwang's award-winning play.

BAY AREA

Free Range Thinking Marsh Berkeley, TheaterStage, 2120 Allston, Berk; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-50. Previews Fri, 8pm; Sat, 5pm (through Sat/12). Opens Fri/18, 8pm. Runs Fri, 8pm; Sat, 5pm. Through April 9. The Marsh Berkeley presents a new comedic solo show by Robert Dubac.

The Iliad Berkeley City Club, 1802 Fairview, Berk; (510) 698-4030. \$12-24. Opens Fri/18, 8pm. Runs Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through April 3. Inferno Theatre Company presents an adaptation of Homer's ancient tale.

ONGOING

As Always Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson; www.AsAlwaysTickets.com. \$25. Thurs-Sun, 8pm. Through March 27. Tracy Ward directs a new musical by Peter W. Tucker.

Caliente Pier 29, The Embarcadero; 438-2668, www.love.zinzanni.org. \$117-145. Wed-Sat, 6pm; Sun, 5pm. Teatro Zinzanni presents a new production conceived in San Francisco.

40 Pounds in 12 Weeks: A Love Story The Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-35. Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8:30pm. Through March 26. "I hate assumptions," says Pidge Meade. In fact, her new solo show, about her experience as a young woman of size on a brutal crash diet, goes a long way toward unsettling more than one. Developed and directed by Charlie Varon (*Rush Limbaugh in Night School*, *Rabbi Sam*), Meade's multi-character monologue eschews easy sentiment for a sharply performed, consistently funny and genuine engagement with her younger, bigger self. Framed by a 20-year college reunion during which she suffers an unwanted conversation with an old roommate about her intervening dramatic weight loss, Meade recounts trying to lose 40 unwanted pounds to please her devoted but "harsh" father, an Olympic-level gymnastics coach shocked and appalled by her weight gain while at school. The father-daughter story comes interlarded with a few other encounters and characters measuring the variety of attitudes and approaches to weight among women in her Midwestern milieu. Meanwhile, Meade's problematic relationship with her demanding if ultimately responsive father finds an unexpected echo in her

former roommate's pushy inquisitiveness (which, we learn, stems from her own desperate concern over a beloved but obese teen nephew). It's in quietly mingling awkwardness, fear, and love that Meade's piece can really surprise, and reaffirm that whatever else follows, it's the usual assumptions that need shedding first. (Avila)

James Bond: Lady Killer Dark Room Theater, 2263 Mission; 732-9592, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$20. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. Dark Room Theater presents an all-new James Bond adventure.

Lady Grey (in ever lower light) EXIT on Taylor, 277 Taylor; (800) 838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$15-50. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm. Through April 10. Cutting Ball Theater presents the Bay Area premiere of three short plays by Will Eno.

Loveland Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$20-50. Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8:30pm. Through March 26. Ann Randolph's one-woman show extends its run.

The Oldest Profession Brava Theater, 2781 24th St; 647-2822, www.brava.org. \$10-25. Brava Theater presents a play by Paula Vogel, directed by Evren Odckin.

Out of Sight Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-50. Thurs and Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through March 27. Sara Felder's one-woman show extends its run.

Party of 2 — The New Mating Musical Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter; 1-800-838-3006, www.partyof2themusical.com. \$27-29. Fri, 9pm. Open-ended. A musical about relationships by *Shopping! The Musical* author Morris Bobrow.

Regrets Only New Conservatory Theatre Center, 25 Van Ness; 861-8972, www.nctcsf.org. \$24-40. Wed-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through April 3. New Conservatory Theatre presents a play by Paul Rudnick, directed by Andrew Nance.

7 Sins...One More Time! EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy; (800) 838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$25-40. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through April 10. James Judd's long-running comedy hit has a return engagement.

Sex and Death: A Night with Harold Pinter Phoenix Theatre, Suite 601, 414 Mason; 1-800-838-3006, www.offbroadwaywest.org. \$35. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. The thing with Harold Pinter is you never know for certain whether he means for something to be funny or not. Take his most celebrated one-act, *The Dumb Waiter*, a rather tense dialogue between two hit-men waiting for their mark to show which veers into disarmingly surrealist territory once they start receiving mysterious lunch orders via a creaky dumbwaiter, despite not having any food, or indeed any gas to cook food on. Is this Pinter's attempt to lighten the mood in an otherwise joyless examination of two minor functionaries in the criminal underworld, or is it a way for him to inject more unease into their already intractable situation? In Off-Broadway West's staging they opt mainly for the latter interpretation, neither Gus (Conor Hamill) nor Ben (Shane Fahy) play up much of the sly humor tucked into their lines, and

when the "surprise" twist arrives, it feels like a foregone conclusion. More deftly nuanced, the second one-act on the bill, *The Lover* milks the sex lives of the petty bourgeoisie for all the hidden wit and complicated innuendo that could possibly be excavated. Morphing from chilly society marrieds to shameless afternoon fling and "common garden slut" Chad Stender and Nicole Helfer play out a tightly-wound sexual fantasy with a cool edge, a satisfying end to a low-key revival. (Gluckstern)

Tenth Annual Bay One-Acts Festival Boxcar Theatre, 505 Natoma; 891-7235, www.bayoneacts.org. \$20-32. Wed-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 3 and 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through March 26. Three Wise Monkeys Theatre Company presents the tenth incarnation of the curated festival.

BAY AREA

Romeo and Juliet La Val's Subterranean, 1834 Euclid, Berk; www.impacttheatre.com. \$10-20. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. Bet you thought *Romeo and Juliet* was just a sappy love story at its beating heart. But as Impact Theatre's artistic director Melissa Hillman, fight director Dave Meier, and production "blood technician" Tunuvil Luv manage to remind us, *R&J* is known as a tragedy for good reason—full of escalating violence and a bodycount almost as high as Hamlet's. Before they snuff it though, Romeo (Michael Garret McDonald) and Juliet (Luisa Frascioni) fall in love in a meet-cute, after-school special way: Frascioni exhibiting the coltish excitability of a very young teenager, and doofy McDonald egged on by a pack of uncouth youth (Seth Thygesen as Benvolio, Marilet Martinez as Mercutio, Miyuki Bierlein as Balthasar) who pretty much steal the show with their crass deconstruction of Romeo's woes. Unfortunately, the Russian mafia angle is less fully fleshed out than the teen romance portion of the show. Yes, the mobsters all sport some great tattoos, carry mean-looking pistols, and occasionally deliver their lines in Russian thanks to language consultant Helen Nesteruk, but setting the show in the ex-pat Russian community "in the Bay Area" dilutes the extreme feudalism that setting the show in Moscow would imply, and allows the production to rely a little too heavily on familiar California-isms—phrases, behaviors, and fashions—rather than committing fully to exploring the vastly different world of the Russkaya Mafiya. (Gluckstern) **SFBG**

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FILM LISTINGS



Simon Pegg and Nick Frost (2004's *Shaun of the Dead*) play road-trippers who cross paths with an alien in the comedy *Paul*, out Fri/18. | PHOTO BY WILSON WEBB

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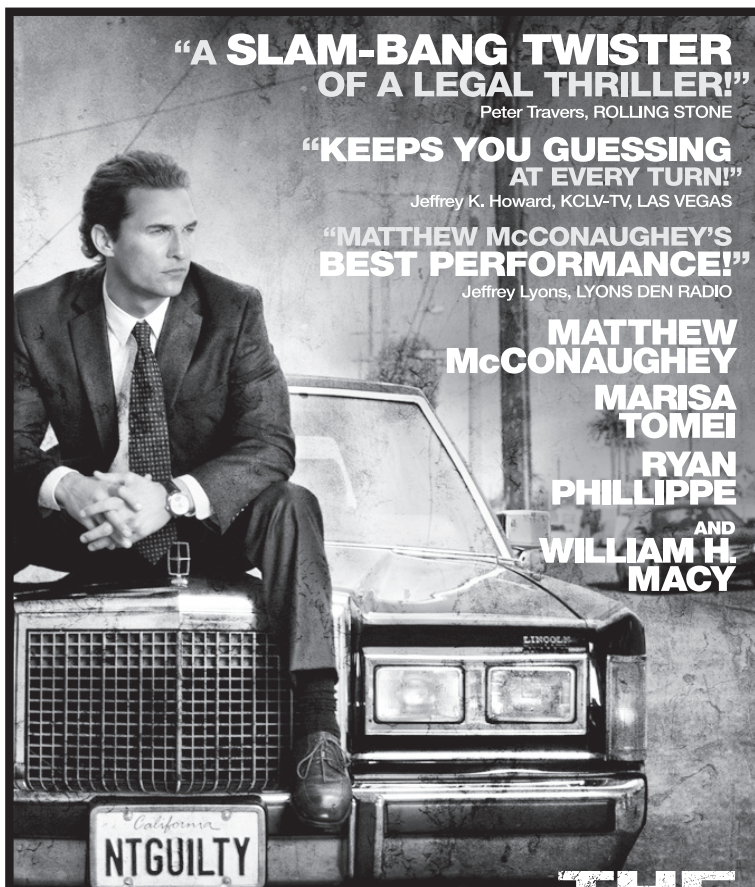
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Film listings are edited by Cheryl Eddy. Reviewers are Kimberly Chun, Michelle Devereaux, Peter Galvin, Max Goldberg, Dennis Harvey, Johnny Ray Huston, Louis Peitzman, Lynn Rapoport, Ben Richardson, and Matt Sussman. For rep house showtimes, see Rep Clock. For first-run showtimes, see Movie Guide at www.sfbg.com. For complete film listings, see www.sfbg.com.

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OPENING

Certified Copy See "Looking Glass Love."
(1:46) *Clay, Shattuck, Smith Rafael.*

▶▶ **Heartbeats** See “Xavier University.”
(1:35) *Lumiere*.

22 **The Human Resources Manager** What happens when a nameless, faceless “human resource” begin to resolve into a palpably real being with hopes, fears, loved ones, a hometown, a past? The harried Human Resources Manager of a big Jerusalem bakery finds out when one of his employer’s foreign workers is killed in a suicide bombing. After her body remains unclaimed in a city morgue, his employer is tagged with callous indifference, and it’s up to the beleaguered HR Manager (Mark Ivanir) — already suffering from something of an existential crisis — to undertake damage control. That task turns out to be absurdly above and beyond the ordinary when he retraces his late charge’s footsteps and tracks down her family in Romania, dogged by a meddling reporter (Guri Alfi). Back in the bleak old country, “neither east nor west,” as he’s constantly reminded, the HR Manager encounters a suitably salty, strange array of characters — the earthy Consul (Rozina Cambos) and the deceased’s divorced husband (Raymond Amsalel) and her feral son (Noah Silver) — though who can actually claim the lady’s remains? The troublesome chore turns into a journey about reconnecting with the people the HR Manager stopped seeing as full-fledged, complicated beings. Working from A.B. Yehoshua’s 2006 novel, *A Woman in Jerusalem*, director Eran Riklis deigns to give his characters names, apart from the dead, and instead focuses on crafting a carefully balanced, altogether enjoyable and accessible black comedy, rendering it all with a delicate touch that Anton Chekhov might have approved of. (1.43) *Opera Plaza, Shattuck.* (Chun)

D **Jane Eyre** Do we really need another adaptation of Jane Eyre? As long as they're all as good as Cary Fukunaga's stirring take on the gothic romance, keep 'em coming. Mia Wasikowska stars in the titular role, with the dreamy Michael Fassbender stepping into the high pants of Edward Rochester. The cast is rounded out by familiar faces like Judi Dench, Jamie Bell, and Sally Hawkins — all of whom breathe new life into the material. It helps that Fukunaga's sensibilities are perfectly suited to the story: he stays true to the novel while maintaining an aesthetic certain to appeal to a modern audience. Even if you know Jane Eyre's story — Mr. Rochester's dark secret, the fate of their romance, etc. — there are still surprises to be had. Everyone tells the classics differently, and this adaptation is a thoroughly unique experience. And here's hoping it pushes the engaging Wasikowska further in her ascent to stardom. (2:00) *Embarcadero*. (Peitzman)

» **Limitless** An open letter to the makers of *Limitless*: please fire your marketing team because they are making your movie look terrible. The story of a deadbeat writer (Bradley Cooper) who acquires an unregulated drug that allows him to take advantage of 100 percent of his previously underutilized brain, *Limitless* is silly, improbable and

features a number of distracting comic-book-esque stylistic tics. But consumed with the comic book in mind, *Limitless* is also unpredictable, thrilling, and darkly funny. The aforementioned style, which includes many instances of the infinite regression effect that you get when you point two mirrors at each other, and a heavy blur to distort depth-of-field, only solidifies the film's cartoonish intentions. Cooper learns foreign languages in hours, impresses women with his keen attention to detail, and sets his sights on Wall Street, a move that gets him noticed by businessman Carl Van Loon (Robert DeNiro in a glorified cameo) as well as some rather nasty drug dealers and hired guns looking to cash in on the drug. *Limitless* is regrettably titled and masquerades in TV spots as a *Wall Street* series spin-off, but in truth it sports the speedy pacing and tongue-in-cheek humor required of a good popcorn flick. (1:37) (Galvin)

The Lincoln Lawyer Matthew McConaughey stars as an unconventional lawyer who takes on a controversial client (Ryan Phillippe). (1:59)

The Music Never Stopped Based on a Dr. Oliver Sacks case history, this neurological wild-ride focuses on the generation gap in extremis: after a '60s teenage son rebels against his parents, staying incommuni-

cado in the interim, he resurfaces over two decades later as a disoriented, possibly homeless patient they're called to identify at a hospital. He's had a benign brain tumor removed — yet it had grown so large before surgery that it damaged gray-matter areas including those handling recent memory. As a result, Gabriel (Lou Taylor Pucci) relates to Mr. (J.K. Simmons) and Mrs. Sawyer (a terrific but underutilized Cara Seymour) as if they were still his upstate NY domestic keepers. A radiant Julia Ormond plays the music therapist who convinces them Gabe might respond to music, which had helped serially glue and sever the father-son bond decades earlier. This is an inherently fascinating psychological study. But director Jim Kohlberg and his scenarists render it placidly inspirational, with too little character nuance, scant period atmosphere (somewhat due to budgetary limitations), and weak homage to the Grateful Dead (ditto) rendering an unusual narrative oddly formulaic. (1:45) *Shattuck*. (Harvey) **Paul** Across the aisle from the alien-shoot-em-up *Battle: Los Angeles* is its amiable, nerdy opposite: *Paul*, with its sweet geeks Graeme (Simon Pegg) and Clive (Nick Frost), off on a post-Comic-Con pilgrimage to all the US sites of alien visitation. Naturally the buddies get a close encounter of their very own, with a very down-to-earth every-dude of a

schwa named Paul (voiced by Seth Rogen), given to scratching his balls, spreading galactic wisdom, utilizing Christ-like healing powers, and cracking wise when the situation calls for it (as when fear of anal probes escalates). Despite a Pegg-and-Frost-penned script riddled with allusions to Hollywood's biggest extraterrestrial flicks and much 12-year-old-level humor concerning testicles and farts, the humor onslaught usually attached to the two lead actors — considered Lewis and Martin for pop-smart Anglophiles — seems to have lost some of its steam, and teeth, with the absence of former director and co-writer Edgar Wright (who took last year's *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* to the next level instead). Call it a "soft R" for language and an alien *sans* pants. (1:44) *California*. (Chun)

Phil Ochs: There But For Fortune When Phil Ochs was at his peak, he was one of the finest polemical folksingers to come out of the '60s, and when he tumbled from those heights, the fall was terrible: he lost more than friends and fame — he appeared to completely lose himself, to substance abuse and mental illness. Director Kenneth Bowser does the singer-songwriter justice with this documentary, threading to-the-ramparts

CONTINUES ON PAGE 42 >>

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tunes like “Hazard, Kentucky,” questioning numbers a la “Love Me, I’m a Liberal,” and achingly beautiful songs such as “Jim Dean of Indiana” throughout political events of the day, scenes from a protest movement that were inextricably entangled with Ochs’ oeuvre. Along with the many clips of Ochs in performance are interviews with the artist’s many friends, cohorts, and fans including Van Dyke Parks (who is becoming a Thurston Moore-like go-to for a generation’s damaged voices), brother (and music archivist) Michael Ochs, Joan Baez, Tom Hayden, Peter Yarrow, Billy Bragg, daughter Meegan Ochs, and Ed Sanders. Expect an education in Ochs’ art, but also, perhaps more importantly (to the singer-songwriter), a glimpse into a time and place that both fed, fueled and bestowed

meaning on his songs. Bowser succeeds in paints the portrait of a performer that was both idealistic and careerist, driven to fight injustice yet also propelled to explore new creative avenues (like recording with local musicians in Africa). Did Ochs fall — by way of drink, drugs, and mental illness — or was he pushed, as the artist claimed when he accused CIA thugs of destroying his vocal chords? The filmmaker steps back respectfully, allowing us to draw our own conclusion about this life lived fully. (1:38) *Smith Rafael*. (Chun)

You Won’t Miss Me Look at this fucking hipster: dour, aimless Shelly (Stella Schnabel, daughter of Julian) has her own New York City apartment (plus access to a country home, the ability to travel to Atlantic City on a whim, etc.) despite having no apparent source of income. Shelly drifts, going on auditions to further her as-yet unsuccessful acting career; leaving monotone voice mails

for her mother; visiting her therapist; hooking up with assorted unwashed dudes; and hanging out with her insipid friends, one of whom helps our hapless 21st century protagonist set up her very first email account. That Shelly is depressed is a given; why anyone would choose to watch this drag of a film is a mystery. Director Ry Russo-Young aims to break up the angst by deploying an array of formats — from Super 8 to Flip — but no amount of artsy quirks (or cameos recognizable only to mumblecore enthusiasts) can make up for *You Won’t Miss Me*’s uninvolved plot and unsympathetic characters. For a less painful (though by no means pain-free) experience, seek out last year’s similar *Tiny Furniture* instead. (1:21) *Roxie*. (Eddy)

ONGOING

The Adjustment Bureau (1:39) *1000 Van Ness*, *Piedmont*, *SF Center*, *Shattuck*,

Sundance Kabuki.

» **Battle: Los Angeles** (1:57) *California*, *1000 Van Ness*.

Beastly (1:35) *1000 Van Ness*.

Biutiful (2:18) *Shattuck*.

» **Black Swan** (1:50) *Shattuck*, *Sundance Kabuki*.

» **Cedar Rapids** (1:26) *California*, *Empire*, *Piedmont*, *Sundance Kabuki*.

Even the Rain (1:44) *Lumiere*, *Shattuck*.

The Fighter (1:54) *1000 Van Ness*, *SF Center*.

Gnomeo and Juliet (1:24) *1000 Van Ness*.

Hall Pass (1:38) *1000 Van Ness*.

Happythankyoumoreplease (1:40) *Lumiere*.

I Am (1:16) *Opera Plaza*, *Shattuck*.

I Am Number Four (1:44) *1000 Van Ness*.

I Saw the Devil (2:21) *Opera Plaza*.

» **The Illusionist** (1:20) *Opera Plaza*, *Smith Rafael*.

Inside Job (2:00) *Bridge*.

The King’s Speech (1:58) *Albany*, *Embarcadero*, *Empire*, *1000 Van Ness*,

Piedmont, *Sundance Kabuki*.

» **Last Lions** (1:28) *Embarcadero*, *Shattuck*, *SF Center*.

Mars Needs Moms (1:28) *1000 Van Ness*,

SF Center.

» **Of Gods and Men** (2:00) *Albany*, *Embarcadero*.

Rango (1:47) *Empire*, *1000 Van Ness*,

Sundance Kabuki.

Red Riding Hood (1:38) *1000 Van Ness*,

Shattuck, *SF Center*.

Take Me Home Tonight (1:37) *1000 Van Ness*.

» **True Grit** (1:50)

SF Center.

» **“2011 Academy Award-Nominated Short Films, Live-Action and Animated”** (Live-

action, 1:50; animated, 1:25) *Red Vic*.

Unknown (1:49) *1000 Van Ness*, *SF Center*.

» **William S. Burroughs: A Man Within**

(1:38) *Roxie*. **SFBG**

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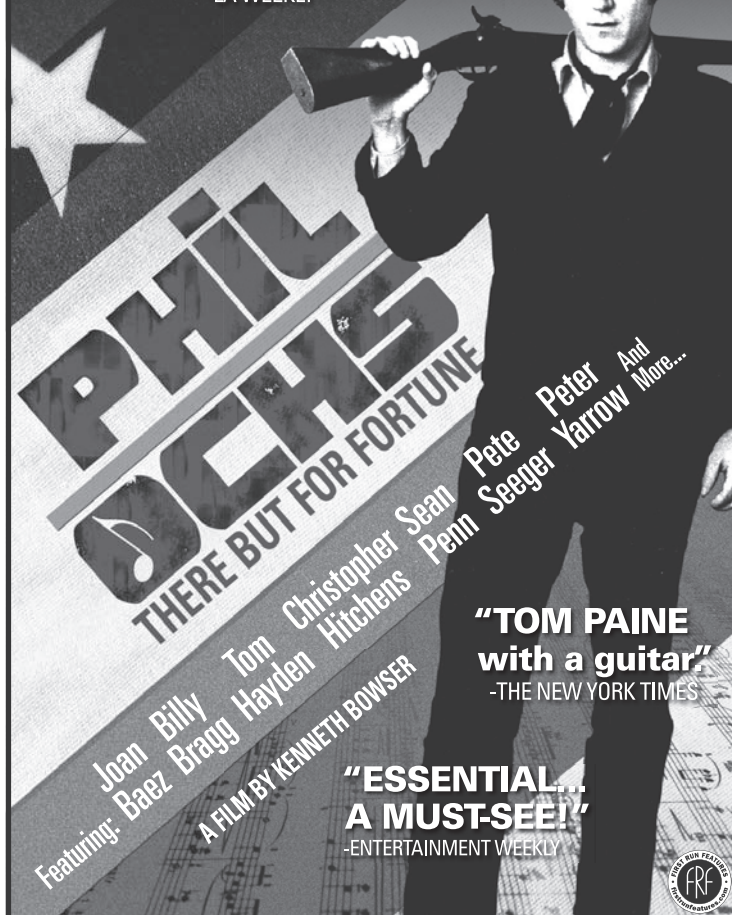
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Marina Theatre 2149 Chestnut. www.Intsf.com/marina_theatre

Metreon Fourth St/Mission. 1-800-FANDANGO.

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Schedules are for Wed/16-Tues/22 except where noted. Director and year are given when available. Double and triple features are marked with a •. All times are p.m. unless otherwise specified.

ARTISTS' TELEVISION ACCESS 992 Valencia, SF; www.atasite.org. \$6. "OpenScreening," Thurs, 8. for participation info, contact ataopenscreening@atasite.org. To Dream of Falling Upwards (Alli, 2011), Fri, 8. "Other Cinema," films about the military-industrial complex by Andrew Wilson, Javier Arbona, and more, Sat, 8:30.

BERKELEY FELLOWSHIP OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS 1924 Cedar, Berk; www.bfuu.org. \$5-10. **COINTELPRO 101**, Tues, 7. With a discussion led by Claude Marks of the Freedom Archives.

CASTRO 429 Castro, SF; (415) 621-6120, www.castrotheatre.com. \$7.50-10. **All About Eve** (Mankiewicz, 1950), Wed, 2:30, 5:10, 8. **The Seventh Seal** (Bergman, 1957), Thurs, 3:15, 7, and **Beauty and the Beast** (Cocteau, 1946), Thurs, 5:05, 8:55. **Battleship Potemkin** (Eisenstein, 1925), Fri-Sun, 7:30, 9:30 (also Sat-Sun, 2, 4, 5:45).

CHRISTOPHER B. SMITH RAFAEL FILM CENTER 1118 Fourth St, San Rafael; (415) 454-1222, www.cafilm.org. \$6.50-15. **Garbo the Spy** (Roch, 2010), call for dates and times. **Certified Copy**

(Kiarostami, 2010), March 18-24, call for times. **Phil Ochs: There But For Fortune** (Bowser, 2010) March 18-24, call for times.

DAVID BROWER CENTER 2150 Allston, Berk; www.browercenter.org. \$10. "EarthDance Short Attention Span Environmental Film Festival," short films about nature, culture, and the environment, Thurs, 7 and 9.

HUMANIST HALL 390 27th St, Oakl; www.humanisthall.org. \$5. **A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crush** (Gelpi and McCormack, 2006), Wed, 7:30.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE 57 Post, SF; (415) 393-0100, rsvp@milibrary.org. \$10. "CinemaLit Film Series: Heros and Misfits: The Films of Stephen Frears." **The Snapper** (1993), Fri, 6.

PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE 2575 Bancroft, Berk; (510) 642-5249, www.bampfa.berkeley.edu. \$5.50-9.50. "Film 50: History of Cinema." **Ugetsu** (Mizoguchi, 1953), Wed, 3:10. "San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival," Wed-Sat. See Film Listings for complete schedule and ticket information. "Under the Skin: The Films of Claire Denis." **No Fear, No Die** (1990), Sun, 3. "Radical Light: Alternative Film and Video in the San Francisco Bay Area." "Experimental Animation," Sun, 5.

RED VIC 1727 Haight, SF; (415) 668-3994; www.redvicmoviehouse.com. \$6-10. **Dazed and Confused** (Linklater, 1993), Wed, 2, 7:15, 9:25. **2011 Academy Award-Nominated Short**

Films, Live-Action and Animated, Thurs-Sat, 9:30 (also Sat, 4:15). **The Illusionist** (Chomet, 2010), Sun-Mon, 7:15, 9:15 (also Sun, 2). "The Ski Channel Presents." **The Story**, Sun, 5. **Rushmore** (Anderson, 1998), March 22-23, 7:15, 9:15 (also March 23, 2).

ROXIE 3117 and 3125 16th St, SF; (415) 863-1087, www.roxie.com. \$10. **William S. Burroughs: A Man Within** (Leyser, 2010), Wed-Thurs, 7, 9:10. **You Won't Miss Me** (Russo-Young, 2009), March 18-24, 7, 8:50 (also Sat-Sun, 3:15, 5:10).

VORTEX ROOM 1082 Howard, SF; www.myspace.com/thevortexroom. \$5 donation. "Thursday Film Cult." **The Ambushers** (1967), Thurs, 9, and **Salt and Pepper** (1968), Thurs, 11.

WOMEN'S BUILDING Audre Lord Room, 3543 18th St, SF; sheviros@gmail.com (RSVP requested). Free. **My Mom the General** (Rosenfield), Thurs, 8:30.

YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS 701 Mission, SF; (415) 978-2787, www.ybca.org. \$6-8. "Volume 14: Middle East," nine videos focusing on the Middle East compiled by ASPECT: The Chronicle of New Media Art, Jan 13-March 27 (gallery hours Thurs-Sat, noon-8; Sun, noon-6). "Human Rights Watch Film Festival." **Enemies of the People** (Lemkin and Sambath, 2009), Thurs, 7:30. "Iran Beyond Censorship." **Offside** (Panahi, 2008) with **The Accordion** (Panahi, 2010), Sun, 2. **SFBG**

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Run-of-engagement passes received through this promotion do not guarantee admission to the theatre. Seating is on a first come, first served basis. Theatre is open to paying customers. A recipient of tickets assumes any and all risks related to use of ticket and accepts any restrictions required by ticket provider, Roadside Attractions, San Francisco Bay Guardian, Terry Hines & Associates and their affiliates accept no responsibility or liability in connection with any loss or accident incurred in connection with use of a prize. Tickets cannot be exchanged, transferred or redeemed for cash, in whole or in part. We are not responsible if, for any reason, winner is unable to use his/her ticket in whole or in part. Not responsible for lost, delayed or misdirected entries. All federal and local taxes are the responsibility of the winner. Void where prohibited by law.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333528-00 The following person is doing business as **LUV Outdoor**, 211 Jefferson St San Francisco, CA 94133. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Mary Ng. This statement was filed by Mariedyne L. Argente on February 16, 2011. **#113305. March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333560-00 The following person is doing business as **Brothers Hauling**, 1266 39th Ave San Francisco, CA 94122. This business is conducted by a general partnership. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/17/11. Signed Omar Hanna. This statement was filed by Susanna Chin on February 17, 2011. **#113304. March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333620-00 The following person is doing business as **Manzanita Photography**, 3519 Lawton St San Francisco, CA 94122. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 5/26/10. Signed Hugh J. Lawton. This statement was filed by Mariedyne L. Argente on February 22, 2011. **#113306. March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333659-00 The following person is doing business as **Lazarus House Healing by Faith Ministry**, 5 Cameron Way San Francisco, CA 94124. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 4/28/10. Signed Stephanie Hughes. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on February 23, 2011. **#113311. March 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333752-00 The following person is doing business as **My News Peg**, 2743 Folsom St San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/25/11. Signed David Carini. This statement was filed by Alan Wong on February 25, 2011. **#113307. March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333814-00 The following person is doing business as **Nicole Cocci-nelle**, 656 O'Farrell St #301 San Francisco, CA 94109. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Nicole Roberts. This statement was filed by Melissa Ortiz on March 1, 2011. **#113310. March 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333902-00 The following person is doing business as **Diva Nail Lounge**, 2057 Market St San Francisco, CA 94114. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 3/1/11. Signed Linda Hoang. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on March 3, 2011. **#113319. March 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0333982-00 The following person is doing business as **One Will Productions**, 631 Naples St San Francisco, CA 94112. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/1/11. Signed Gloria E Perry. This statement was filed by Mariedyne L. Argente on March 8, 2011. **#113318. March 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0333990-00 The following person is doing business as **The Viking Hairstyling**, 380 Sanchez St San Francisco, CA 94114. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 1/1/01. Signed Jane Lloyd. This statement was filed by Mariedyne L. Argente on March 8, 2011. **#113321. March 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0334059-00 The following person is doing business as **Legal Stream**, 3435 24th St #15 San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Peter Hibdon. This statement was filed by Maribel Jaldon on March 9, 2011. **#113320. March 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. A-0334119-00 The following person is doing business as **Lina's Rest Home**, 84 Norton St San Francisco, CA 94112. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Flor Bautista. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on March 11, 2011. **#113322. March 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2011**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

CASE NUMBER: CNC-11-547530. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION of Khuong Q. Tran for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Khuong Q. Tran** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Khuong Q. Tran Proposed Name: **Kenny Chen** . THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: May 10, 2011. Time: 9:00 AM room - 514. Signed by Ellen Chaitin, Presiding Judge on February 23, 2011. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on February 23, 2011 by Param Natt, Deputy Clerk. **Publication dates: March 2, 9, 16 and 23 2011. L#113309**

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Date of Filing Application: **March 8, 2011**. To Whom It May Concern: The name of the applicant is: **Jose Eduardo Bonillacastro**. The applicant listed above is applying to The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 475 Pine St San Francisco, CA 94104. Type of License Applied for: **41 - ON-SALE BEER AND WINE - EATING PLACE**. **Publication dates: March 16, 2011 L#113324**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-547369. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION of Gyung Suk Jung for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Gyung Suk Jung** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Ye Yang Jung Proposed Name: **Holly Ye Yang Jung**. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: April 26, 2011. Time: 9:00 AM room - 514. Signed by Ellen Chaitin, Presiding Judge on March 7, 2011. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on March 7, 2011 by Carolyn Balistreri, Deputy Clerk. **Publication dates: March 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2011. L#113312**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

CASE NUMBER: CNC-11-547585. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION of Jose Rafael Quevedo for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Jose Rafael Quevedo** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Jose Rafael Quevedo Proposed Name: **Joseph Rafael Quevedo** . THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: May 17, 2011. Time: 9:00 AM room - 514. Signed by Ellen Chaitin, Presiding Judge on March 14, 2011. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on March 14, 2011 by Deborah Steppe, Deputy Clerk. **Publication dates: March 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 2011. L#113323**



CONCESSION OPPORTUNITY AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

CORRECTION: The informational meeting to discuss the retail concession opportunities available at San Francisco International Airport has been re-scheduled for **March 30, 2011**, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at Airport Museum located before the security checkpoint of Boarding Area A of the International Terminal at San Francisco International Airport. Staff will discuss the requirements and process for the following Leases:

- Terminal 3 News and Specialty Store
- Terminal 3 and International Terminal News and Specialty Store
- Terminal 3 and International Terminal News and Bookstore/Cafe
- Terminal 3 Bath & Body Store
- Boarding Area F Newsstand
- Boarding Area F Athletic Apparel and Accessories Store

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CNS#2055301

SUMMONS CASE NUMBER: CGC-10-

501236, NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: **Ira Schanzer and DOES 1 TO 5** YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: **1635 Gough Street Associates, A California Limited Partnership** You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the Plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), The California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. The name and address of this court is: **Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco, 400 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102** The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: **Francisco G. Torres (156169), Zanghi Torres Arshawsky LLP, 703 Market St, Suite 1600 San Francisco, CA 94103 (415) 977-0444** Date: July 2, 2010. Clerk of the Court, Clerk, by P Natt, Deputy. **Publishing dates: March 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2011. L#113308**

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Anticlimax

By Andrea Nemerson
andrea@altsexcolumn.com

Dear Andrea:

I'm living with my first "serious" girlfriend and everything is great except the sex. As far as I can tell, she is having orgasms but I'm not. When we have sex I have to finish myself off with my hand. I don't think it's supposed to go this way.

Love,

Disappointed

Dear Dis:

You don't say whether you've ever had intercourse with anyone else before Serious, but I'm going to guess not.

So anyway. A little self-stim never hurt anyone. I don't think that part is, in and of itself, a problem. Technically, it's actually a solution. It could be a bit grim, though, to always have to rely on your own devices despite having gone to all the trouble to acquire and keep a partner.

Typically, anorgasmia and, uh, semi-orgasmia are usually a girl problem, with guy problems tending to run to the can't-get-it-up, can't-keep-it-up, and "whoops!" varieties. Or maybe you're on SSRI antidepressants, which I'm kind of hoping you are, because that can be fixed.

No? And no blood pressure meds either, right? Or any scarring or neuropathy or ... no, you're like 20 years old. So it's almost certainly not some physical thing. Probably you are entirely capable of reaching orgasm easily but you're not letting yourself.

Do you think you might be going kind of out-of-body and are watching yourself perform instead of feeling yourself feel? Are you wondering if she really likes having sex with you or is just pretending? All this falls under the clunky-sounding rubric of "spectatoring," and you can get out of the habit but it does take some work.

Are you anxious? Worried about keeping it up? Judging yourself? Raised to believe that sex is bad — or that premarital sex is bad? Or are you fine with sex but terribly worried you'll get her pregnant and ruin everybody's life?

Obviously that last one can be addressed with technology. And other anxieties can be salved through other technologies, be they drugs or meditation or talking to each other so you can stop wondering and worrying about what she might be thinking.

But maybe what's wrong is the intercourse itself. An old instructor of mine used to teach that sex is nothing but fantasy plus friction, and if you're OK in the fantasy department, maybe you need more friction. Move! Put her on top. Try it from behind. I don't care, just try something else. And try more lube while you're at it, and also, less.

Or maybe you are one of those men, not rare but rarely spoken of, who just don't like intercourse much. You didn't have this problem back while you were still letting yourselves have teenage sex before you moved in together. If this is the case, all you have to do is add back the stuff you like to the stuff she (presumably) likes and boom, everybody's happy.

Final possibility? You two are not very good at this. This, too, is OK — lack of knowledge and lack of skill are entirely curable conditions.

Love,

Andrea

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